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INDIA IN THE CRUCIBLE

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INDIA IN THE CRUCIBLE

BY

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(Member of the Legislative Assembly)

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We no longer talk of holding the gorgeous East in fee ; we invite, in a contrary sense, the diverse peoples of this continent to march side by side with us in a fruitful and harmonious partnership, which may recreate the greatest and the proudest days of Indian history.

(LORD BIRKENHEAD in the House of Lords,
7th July, 1925.)

PREFACE

THE policy of reforms in India met with stout opposition from the British people in India on the ground that it was too radical and extravagant. It has not been welcomed by the advanced political parties, who criticised it as "inadequate, unsatisfactory and disappointing." The responsible people who worked the Reforms for what they were worth received no encouragement from their constituencies. The Reforms, therefore, have powerful enemies and feeble friends.

The Extreme Indians will not be sorry if the Reforms are withdrawn; but they will prepare the country for Direct Action, instead of wasting their time in Parliamentary Action, which means all criticism and no responsibility. The Extreme Europeans in India do not suggest the withdrawal of the Reforms, though they will be really pleased if there be a belated dawn of wisdom in Whitehall.

It will be agreed on all hands that there will be no purpose in proceeding with the policy of reforms if it cannot produce zealous workers and an atmosphere of good will. In the following pages the author has tried to present all sides of the picture to enable the reader to form his judgment on the whole.

Even the worst detractors of the Reforms must admit that they have created a democratic surge throughout the country, the repercussions of which have disturbed even the peace of a vast territory where self-government in its medieval and despotic form still

obtains. This consists of five hundred and sixty two States not directly under British rule but governed by the ruling Chiefs. Whatever the political agitator might say to the contrary, barring exceptional States, the administration in this territory, which comprises 23 per cent. of the Indian population (320 millions), and 39 per cent. of the total area (1,800,000 square miles), leaves much to be desired, as compared, or more correctly contrasted, with administration in British India. The finances of the States are scandalously maladministered, most Indian rulers treating the revenues of the State as their own private income. The State itself is looked upon by them as their private estate ! The Judiciary is scandalously corrupt as contrasted with Judiciary in British India. Press Act obtains in some States where there is public opinion to stifle, while it has long ago been repealed in British India. This subject, which will have to be treated separately, does not come within the scope of this book, but it is interesting to note that a bye-product of the Montagu reforms has been the disturbances of feeling in the States, where public opinion would rather have the system that obtains in British India, both in regard to justice and administration, than the one to which they have been accustomed for ages.

This fact incidently establishes that the soundness of the policy of Reforms cannot be questioned. Those who have lived under that scheme for the last eight years might have outgrown it, and need a widening of its scope, to enquire into which His Majesty's Reform Commission is touring the country. When they condemn the Reform scheme as inadequate, it only shows that it has proved a good appetiser. Its impartial judges, however, are the inhabitants in contiguous territories who aspire to live under the same dispensation. The legitimacy of that aspiration has been, apparently, recognised in the inauguration by the Government of India of a simultaneous, if separate,

inquiry under the Chairmanship of that gifted and able administrator, Sir Harcourt Butler. The subjects of the States justly feel that even there Reforms, such as exist to-day in British India,

“.....can spread a charm,
Redress the clime and all its rage disarm.”

C. S. RANGA IYER.

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For years, it may be for generations, patriotic and loyal Indians have dreamed of Swaraj for their Motherland. To-day you have beginnings of Swaraj within my Empire ; and widest scope and ample opportunity for progress to the liberty which my other Dominions enjoy.

(Message of His Majesty the King-Emperor
delivered by the DUKE OF CONNAUGHT
on 9th *February*, 1921.)

PART I. THE SIMON COMMISSION

"THAT this House concurs in the submission to His Majesty of the names of the following persons, namely, Sir John Simon, Viscount Burnham, Lord Stratheona and Mount Royal, Mr. Cadogan, Mr. Walsh, Colonel Lane Fox and Major Atlee to act as a Commission for the purpose of section 84 A of the Government of India Act."

This motion was unanimously adopted, without a division, by the House of Lords and Commons on the 24th and 25th of November, 1927, respectively.

Mr. Walsh, on grounds of health, could not serve on the Commission and his place was taken by Mr. Hartshorn, a Welsh Socialist.

It will be interesting to know "Who is Who" on the Commission from one or two who know.

Mr. Lloyd George, a better judge than whom it is difficult to have on mice and men, says, in a cabled article to the *Montreal Daily Star* :

"The ablest member, apart from Sir John Simon, is Mr. Hartshorn. He is a miners' leader whose speeches on coal have been distinguished by knowledge, lucidity and moderation. Outside that question, his natural modesty has not permitted him to travel. But he will be an able jurymen when a proposition is submitted to him.

"Mr. Lane Fox, another member of the Commission, is a typical English squire, which means that he is more intelligent than he looks.

"Lord Burnham is an able, broad-minded and moderate man. He is a Jew, but possesses more of the caution than of the enterprise of his race."

As for Sir John Simon, he is one of those "not to know whom argues oneself unknown." Let us, however, see what Mr. Lloyd George thinks of him :

"He has one supreme advantage, that the problem of self-government within the Empire is an ideal to which he has given his life-long and unselfish devotion. British-Indian opinion is naturally not biased in favour of a large extension of self-government. Sir John Simon cannot, therefore, expect to be pushed in that direction by his countrymen in India. He must rely on his own instinctive Liberalism, trained as it has been in the school of Gladstone."

Mr. Cadogan Lord Birkenhead commended in the House of Lords, as "the tactful, courteous and able Secretary of the Speaker of the House of Commons for a period of many years."

"A younger man, Lord Strathcona," Lord Birkenhead praised for "an individuality of character and an exhibition of industry which have carried him from an inferior plane of our activities to a not-unimportant post in the party organisation."

Major Atlee, said Lord Birkenhead, comes with a very strong recommendation from the leader of the Labour Party for "efficiency, capacity and industry."

Mr. Lloyd George himself wrote of the members of the Commission :

"No more fair-minded body of men have been chosen. It is a conspicuously fair Commission. But I cannot see any of them actively helpful in seeking out a solution."

The solution is a matter for the Government of India and His Majesty's Government to seek out. Perhaps that was exactly why men "in the second flight," as the *Times* put it, with the exception of the Chairman, have been chosen for a Commission whose only function is to explore the avenues and report.

PART I.

INDIA IN THE CRUCIBLE

CHAPTER I

BRITISH LIBERALS AND INDIAN REFORMS

"MUCH has been written by philosophers and poets of the relations between the East and the West. As I study the vast task which is laid on my shoulders, I become more and more convinced that it is here on the soil of India that reconciliation must be accomplished. It is in this land that we may yet achieve the understanding between the East and the West without which both are so much poorer, but with which there is a future happiness, confidence and progress for India and Britain alike"*

In these words Sir John Simon summed up the faith that was in him. The above utterance at once brings out the Liberalism of the great Englishman, whom His Majesty's Government have appointed as the Chairman of a Parliamentary Mission on Indian Reforms. The Indian National Congress declared war on the Commission. The Indian Legislative Assembly, which was in official circles expected to behave in a more responsible way, decided, by a majority, not to have anything to do with the Commission, all the non-official parties having united to place on record their sense of non-confidence in the same. Angry and violent speeches were made on the floor of the House. In the country the non-co-operating section, which was by no means

* Speech delivered at a luncheon given to the Parliamentary Commission on Reforms by Colonel Gidney, M.L.A., representative of the Anglo-Indian community, on 27th March, 1928.

small and insignificant, waved black flags in front of the Commissioners. In the city of Madras a general "hartal" (strike) was observed, resulting in a political riot and loss of lives and property. Sir John Simon and his Commission could visit that place only under police protection and after the prohibition under law of any more "hartals" during their stay in the city. Notwithstanding all this, Sir John Simon has spoken with the patience of Job. Steeped in the traditions of Liberalism, Sir John has shown that he means well and whether political India co-operates or boycotts, he will not swerve from the path before him.

India and England, and those who believe in British connection, remember with gratitude four great names, all of whom have been members of the historic party with a great past to which Sir John Simon has the honour to belong.

Bright, Ripon, Morley and Montagu are honoured names in India. At three critical periods of India's chequered history, these Liberal statesmen saved her for England and the Empire.

To the genius and vision of John Bright, India owes its Magna Charta. The Rebellion of 1857 had been put down. The rebels were shot. Their allies were punished or forgiven according to the nature of their crime. It was, however, felt by the statesmen of England that the old order must change. The rule of the East India Company was abolished, the Company's territories coming under the direct control of the Crown. The Government of India needed remodelling. The Government of India Bill, of 1858, was introduced by Disraeli. When it came up for second reading, John Bright delivered his celebrated speech* in which he pleaded for "a little more daylight, more simplicity, more responsibility." The population of India was greatly impoverished, he said; taxes were unbearable;

* In the House of Commons, 24th June, 1858.

police arrangements were inadequate ; judicial administration was unsatisfactory ; the finances in the country were in a bad state. All this burden appeared to fall on the man-on-the-spot, namely, the Governor-General of India. Political discontent had to be removed. A Mutiny was no doubt quelled, but the people had to be appeased. In the East, where the sentiment of attachment to a personal ruler is strong, it would be an act of statesmanship to win over a high-spirited and warm-hearted people.

Bright suggested the idea of a Royal proclamation to conciliate the Indian people, to give them satisfaction for the present and hope for the future. It required courage to talk of conciliation at a time when the English families that had suffered had numerous sympathisers at home, when the massacre of English women and children was still crying for revenge. Adequate retaliation accompanied sanguinary reconquest, but that would not tie the tongue of those, most naturally, who had suffered and whose relations had been killed. Far sighted Englishmen, however, knew that there was another side to the picture. On the Indian side, too, reprisals had inflicted corresponding suffering and sorrow. They too, being human, were thirsting for revenge. Defeated, humiliated and repressed, their rage for vengeance was all the greater. For the time impotent, "revenge of a hundred years old hath still its sucking teeth." Therefore it was the object of Bright to close an unfortunate chapter and open a new one. It is the victorious party that must lead the way. He deprecated those who went on denouncing the Indians, who only attempted to overthrow what was to them, after all, a foreign Government.

"I would not permit," said he, "any man in my presence, without rebuke, to indulge in the calumnies and expressions of contempt which I

have recently heard poured forth without measure upon the whole population of India." Hard words only make reconciliation difficult. "If I had the responsibility of administering the affairs of India," said Bright, "I would, immediately after this Bill passes, issue a Proclamation in India which should reach every subject of the British Crown in that country and be heard of in the territories of every Indian Prince or Raja."

The Royal proclamation was hailed by the people as a boon. It was welcomed by the educated and the politically minded classes as "a Great Charter."

If the Queen's proclamation was inspired by a great Liberal thinker, its spirit was translated into action by a great Liberal statesman. Mr. Gladstone had confidence in Lord Ripon, whom he specially chose to succeed as Viceroy (June, 1880) Lord Lytton, a favourite of Disraeli, who had made a mess of things alike in his Foreign and Home policy. Lord Lytton had suppressed the indigenous Press by passing the vernacular Press Act, and in a moment of "undefinable terror"* of "an almost overpowering" Russian menace and the prospect of "a Russianised Afghanistan," he worked at his expensive project of a scientific frontier which was to be identical with the Hindu Kush. Lord Ripon, with Gladstone's support, reversed the Disraelian policy of Lord Lytton regarding Afghanistan, repealed the Vernacular Press Act, and strove to introduce far-reaching administrative and judicial reforms. His scheme of local self-government was hailed by the Indian people as giving them an opportunity for self-help and self-development, though opinion of the European officials and non-officials in India opposed it as fraught with

* *British Government in India, Vol. II*, page 239. By Lord Curzon. First published in 1925.

danger. Lord Curzon described it several years after as :

“The high tide of Westernisation . . .” * “an experiment which was certainly premature at the time, but once made could not be withdrawn.”

Lord Ripon's scheme “to remove from the code at once and completely every Judicial disqualification which is based merely on race distinctions” raised a storm in the European circles, the memory of which acts as a severe check on every ambitious Anglo-Indian reformer and Viceroy.

“The Viceroy,” says Lord Curzon, “was personally insulted in Calcutta, Government House was partially boycotted by the British community, the Services were exasperated and estranged and a plot was hatched for kidnapping the Viceroy, hustling him on to a ship and sending him off to the Cape.” *

Why this Anglo-Indian revolt? For acting on the Queen's proclamation that there would be no racial discriminations and all are equal in the eye of the law and justice!

The Government of India's proposals were briefly these :

“We propose to confine the office of justice of the peace, and with it the power of trying European British subjects, to those persons, whether European or native who have received a training that may be presumed to guarantee the possession of the qualities required for the proper disposal of such cases. In this view we think that all district magistrates and sessions judges should be vested with the powers in question in virtue of their office, and by a definite provision in the law ; and we would

* Ibid, page 243.

empower the local governments, outside the presidency towns, to confer these powers upon those members (a) of the covenanted civil service, (b) statutory rules, and (c) of the non-regulation commission who are already exercising first-class magisterial powers, and are, in their opinion, fit to be intrusted with these further powers. We would make no distinction in the law between European and native officers. We consider that the care exercised in the selection of officers for the covenanted service, both in regulation and non-regulation provinces, together with the subsequent training that they receive, warrants our amending the Law in the manner proposed. As a fact, no officer would be eligible until he had passed all the departmental examinations, and been in training long enough to show the superior authorities whether he would be likely to use any powers conferred upon him with proper discretion. These proposals will completely remove from the law all distinctions based on the race of the judge. The limitations remaining on the jurisdiction of popular classes of magistrates will be based, not on any difference of race, but simply on differences of training and experience."*

On the merits of the Bill all were agreed.

"At first," says Lord Ripon's biographer, "everything seemed to promise a smooth passage of the Bill, and its unruffled acceptance by the general public. What little criticism there was in the clubs and newspapers was casual and wholly unimpassioned, while the officials everywhere were overwhelmingly sympathetic."

Let us see what was the feeling in England :

"When the Bill reached London, the experts at Whitehall were apparently very much in the same

* *Life of the First Marquess of Ripon.* By Lucien Wolf.

case as their colleagues in India. The Secretary of State in Council accorded his official sanction without reservation, and not a hint of any misgivings was communicated to Ripon."

On 2nd February, 1883, the Bill was introduced into the Legislative Council by Sir Courtenay Ilbert, the new Law Member.

"Then," says Lord Ripon's biographer, "with dramatic suddenness the storm broke. Within a few weeks the whole of the British community in the Peninsula was swept by a tornado of violent denunciation of the Bill. A monster indignation meeting took place in the Calcutta Town Hall, at which the speeches were of an intemperance beyond all limits of decency. Similar meetings were held all over the presidency, and the Anglo-Indian Press—notably the *Englishman*—became utterly hysterical. An Anglo-Indian and European Defence Association was formed, which became the official organisation of the movement. Among other features of their campaign, the volunteers were openly incited to resign in a mass, and certain persons even 'sounded opinions in the canteens'—in other words, attempted to seduce the army. The non-official community boycotted Ripon's levées, and there was a proposal to boycott the Government loan. On his return to Calcutta in the winter the Viceroy was openly insulted in the streets by planters brought down from the Mofussil for the occasion. An emissary named Atkins was sent to England to arouse the British working man against the Bill. The wife of the Chief Justice showed her appreciation of the responsibility attaching to her husband's official position by getting up a 'Ladies' petition' against the Bill. Ripon gives a quotation from the letters of a certain 'Brittanicus' (sic !), who wrote

to the *Englishman* regularly on the subject : 'The only people who have any right to India are the British.' The behaviour of the natives in the face of this campaign was, on the whole, surprisingly moderate."

Anglo-Indian revolt triumphed. The Viceroy was disgraced and defeated. "The Bill was only placed on the statute book," says Lord Curzon, "in a greatly modified form." The Indians felt that Lord Ripon had surrendered. It was their own fault. They had no training in agitation. They had no organisation either.

No Viceroy would like to be bullied and coerced by a minority of foreigners on a matter which involved a fundamental principle of justice and fair play to the children of the soil. It was time that Indians set up a national organisation of their own, as Her Majesty's unofficial and unrecognised opposition, to support and oppose the Government whenever necessary.

Lord Dufferin was a diplomat whose administration was marked by a startling event, the founding of the Indian National Congress. It must be amazing and incredible to be told that the father of the Congress was the then Viceroy !

Sir William Wedderburn tells the interesting story :*

"In initiating the National movement, Mr. Hume took counsel with the Viceroy, Lord Dufferin ; and whereas he was himself disposed to begin this propaganda on the social side, it was apparently by Lord Dufferin's advice that he took up the work of political organisation as the first matter to be dealt with. Lord Dufferin seems to have told him that as the head of the Government he had found the greatest difficulty in ascertaining the real wishes of the people ; and that for purposes of administration, it

* Allan Octavian Hume, I.C.S., pages 59 and 60. By Sir William Wedderburn.

would be a public benefit if there existed some responsible organisation, through which the Government could be kept informed regarding the best Indian public opinion. He further observed owing to the wide differences in caste, race and religion, social reform in India required local treatment rather than the guidance of a national organisation. These kindly counsels were received with grateful appreciation by all concerned. Indeed so cordial were the relations that Lord Dufferin was approached with a view to the first Congress being held under the presidency of Lord Reay, then Governor of Bombay. Lord Dufferin welcomed the proposal as showing the desire of the Congress to work in complete harmony with the Government but he considered that many difficulties would be involved if a high official presided over such an assembly. The idea was, therefore, abandoned, but none the less the first Congress was opened with friendly sympathy of the highest authorities."

The failure of the Ilbert Bill had left a legacy for the Congress whose formula for the future could be summed up in two words, "agitation" and "boycott." Lord Dufferin himself felt constrained to repudiate his own offspring. He attacked the Congress as "a big jump into the unknown."* If a handful of Anglo-Indians could bring the Government down on its knees on a question of vast moral consequences on the merits of which both Calcutta and Whitehall had fully agreed it was time, felt the Congressmen, to carry the message of boycott to the masses. Indians were only waiting for an opportunity which came with Lord Curzon's "partition of Bengal." The Bengalees, a particularly clannish race, did not approve of the Partition of what they called a joint family of the

**Indian National Evolution.* By Babu Ambica Charan Mazumdar.

Bengalee-speaking people. India consists of many races, but the narrow patriotism of the Bengalee is not found in other provinces of India. As the Englishman is proud of England, the French are fond of France, the Germans of their Fatherland, so is the Bengalee passionately fond of "his Motherland of Bengal."* Narrow? Yes it is narrower than Nationalism or, more correctly, inter-nationalism, because India is not one nation, any more than Europe. But India owes its national conception to Britain and the Bengalee. The Bengalee's is far wider than the narrow self of the parochial patriot. His literature and philosophy make him love Bengal first and through Bengal, India. The man who does not love his hearth and home cannot love his tribe or race. Provincial patriotism is a prelude to nationalism. When one speaks of provincial patriotism in reference to any particular province in India, he is apt to forget that each province is as big as Great Britain in size and population alike. The Bengalee's provincialism is but a stepping-stone to nationalism, which accounts for the Babu leading the sub-continent of India. Mrs. Besant has an excellent test of a man's fitness to serve humanity. When a man tells freely this great Theosophist that he desires to serve "mankind," she says to him, with a view to test whether he is fit, "That is a splendid desire. Meanwhile, what are you doing for your home, your city, your province?" When he answers, innocently, "Nothing," the master-builder knows that he is not even an apprentice in the service of the country. The Bengalee tried his apprentice hands at "the Partition of Bengal," and presently became a skilful craftsman. The Partition movement produced nation-builders of the first magnitude.

The Congressmen of Bengal who disliked the Partition started in right earnest a constitutional campaign

* Swami Vivekanand's speeches.

on a provincial scale. The Extremists, who have never reconciled themselves to foreign rule, presently appeared on the stage only to stir the movement with a vision and a dream. Their goal was not the annulment of the Partition, but the extirpation of those who were responsible for the Partition. They wanted to float the British down the Hugli to the Bay of Bengal, and started bombing their allies in the streets of Calcutta. British rule was face to face with a full blooded revolution during the viceroyalty of Lord Minto, who succeeded Lord Curzon. The movement was spreading the spirit of destruction and hatred of the British far and wide. Lord Morley, the Secretary of State, was asked by the Government of India to sanction drastic measures of repression. "I trust and fully believe," wrote Lord Morley to Lord Minto, the Viceroy, "that you will not judge me to be callous, sitting comfortably in an armchair at Whitehall while bombs are scattering violent death in India!"*

"Honest John" was unhappy. Could repression succeed? "If reforms do not save the British Raj, nothing else will," wrote the good orthodox Whig. To this the Tory Viceroy† firmly replied:

"The Raj will not disappear in India so long as the British race remains as it is, because we shall fight for the Raj as hard as we have ever fought, if it comes to fighting, and we shall win, as we have always done. My great object is that it shall not come to that."

Minto agreed to reforms and Morley to repression,

Lord Morley had to fight against heavy odds. "That unsympathetic tribe, the Anglo-Indians of Calcutta," as he called them, were against the reforms, though his proposals were essentially of an evolutionary

* Morley's *Recollections*, Vol II.

† Lord Minto—a *Memoir*. By John Buchan.

character, keeping the power of the Executive unimpaired. If Morley had to live under the peril of being bombed in a foreign country, he would not have called them "unsympathetic," because they were in a bellicose mood. At home the Conservative press were opposed to his reform zeal. "The *Times* is shaking his head," he wrote to Lord Minto. Influential ex-Governors, ex-Viceroy, and the host of retired civil servants were also strongly antagonistic to his policy of truckling to what Lord Curzon characterised as "machine-made agitation." Mr. (then) Morley, replying, said :*

"It has been said, and unfortunately by an important person in India (Lord Curzon), that this demonstration of opposition in Bengal was ' machine-made ' opinion, that it was the work of political wire-pullers and political agitators. I have often heard that kind of allegation made before. Governments are apt, when an inconvenient storm of public opinion arises, to lay it at the door of political wire-pullers and agitators. (Hear, hear.) There are, however, Indian officials of great weight and authority who entirely put aside that insinuation, and who argue that these Calcutta agitators would have had no response from the people they were appealing to if there had not been in the minds of the people a distinct feeling that they were going to suffer a great wrong and inconvenience ; and, although, no doubt the agitators could form and disseminate these views, yet these sentiments and views existed quite independently of any wire-pulling or agitation. That is my own conclusion from reading the papers."

The Liberalism of Lord Morley and the method of his controversy did not meet with the approval of the

* Debate on the Address, February, 1906, House of Commons.

European members of the Indian Civil Service. In the Viceroy's own Cabinet there was opposition. The Viceroy himself had doubts and misgivings. These were, however, removed, thanks to Lord Minto's personal admiration for Morley and his own change of opinion after a good deal of correspondence. Minto began to think like Morley himself when he wrote later on :

" I believe that the broadening of political representation has saved India from far greater troubles than those we have now to face. I am convinced that the enlargement of our administrative machinery has enormously strengthened the hands of the Viceroy and the Government of India and has brought factors to our aid which would otherwise have had no sympathy with us."*

Lord Morley was guided in his work by the principle, philosophy and tradition of a whole lifetime. A man of strong conviction, Morley was fortunate in having in Lord Minto an admirer who was willing to be convinced and persuaded. But there was a time when Minto felt like resigning. If he did not yield to this feeling, it was because he thought it would be following a bad precedent.

The Minto-Morley reforms, however, did not satisfy India's hunger for responsible government. The Reforms gave to the people's representatives the power to speak, but transferred not one iota of responsibility, which remained in the hands of the permanent members of the Civil Service.

" The voice of criticism," as truly observed by a Secretary of State and Viceroy, " was never silent, but its tone showed a gradual change with the passing years ; the purely negative attitude of opposition gradually passed into a more construc-

* *Lord Minto—A Memoir*, page 303. By John Buchan.

tive policy. Criticism came to be combined with the advocacy of progress and with demands that became steadily more insistent for a form of government which would leave Indians free to rule India in a manner consistent with Indian ideas. The spirit of liberty was abroad and active. We can distinguish clearly the directions in which political activities were mainly bent.”*

The task which faced Mr. Edwin Montagu was simply stupendous. When England comes to realise the greatness of Mr. Montagu's achievement, he will be given the same place that history has given to Campbell-Bannerman as the statesman who saved South Africa for the Empire.

Though India was loyal, the agitator's keenness to send soldiers to the various fronts was inspired only by his ambition to have his national dignity elevated and his national status recognised. India disliked the expression “Dependency” as distinguished from “Dominion.” One of the Indian orators said that England was very much a dependency of India during the war, and therefore it was a case of mutual dependence.

The declarations of the prominent statesmen of England, from the Prime Minister downward, have kindled the sentiment of national pride. Speaking on India, on 4th September, 1914, in the Guildhall, London, the Prime Minister said :

“India, (cheers,) with no less alacrity, has claimed her share in the common task. Every class and creed, British and native, princes and people, Hindus and Mohamedans vie with one another in a noble and emulous rivalry. Two divisions of their magnificent army are already on their way. (Cheers.)

* Para. 14, Montagu-Chelmsford Report on Indian Constitutional Reforms.

We welcome with appreciation and affection their proffered aid, and in an Empire which knows no distinction of race or caste, where all alike are subjects of the King-Emperor, are joint and equal custodians of our common bequests and fortunes, we here hail with profound and heartfelt gratitude their association side by side and shoulder to shoulder with our Home and Dominion troops, under the flag which is the symbol to all of a unity that the world in arms cannot dis sever or dissolve (cheers).”*

Mr. (then) Asquith’s speech was quoted in every newspaper and every campaign for recruitment.

“Let us fight England’s battle, because it is the War for Freedom. Is not England the august mother of liberty? Let us join the ranks in no niggardly spirit. The idea of bargaining is alien to the Indian mind.”

In this style speeches were delivered and appeals for recruitment issued. Prayers were offered for the success of the British arms from a thousand temples. And the brave men who went to battle were blessed by their noble wives, reminiscent of the age of chivalry in India, to return victorious or die heroically.

The spirit in which India rose as one man and responded to the call of England and the Empire could be gathered from the following extract from the *Times* of 29th August, 1914:

“The Indian agitator, Mr. Tilak, who was sentenced to six years’ transportation in 1908 for publishing seditious articles and was released last June, made a speech in Poona to-day urging everyone to support the Government in every way possible. The present, he said, was not the time to press for reforms. They must sink all differences. The presence of their

* Speeches by the Earl of Oxford and Asquith.

rulers was desirable even from the point of view of self-interest."

"Domestic discontent and political wrangles were laid aside," observed a responsible writer*. "and India stood solidly and whole-heartedly for the cause of the allies," In the words of the same writer, "the world-war discredited many prophets and none more signally than those who foretold that the hour of England's trial would be that of India's freedom. Events speedily showed that the Indian peoples had no wish to break the Imperial tie."

But the war was much too prolonged. India could not be for long fed on words and promises. The political grievances, the expression of which was suspended, began to find an audience.

"The temper of the people was in the later stages of war severely tried. The requirements of allies drained India of food and other articles of common use, and the flow of cotton goods and other important merchandise ceased. A rise in prices, such as occurred, subjects a poor population like that of India to great privations, and account must be taken of this in appreciating the steadfastness of the people throughout the prolonged and dubious struggle."†

Lest India should go the way of Russia, Mrs. Besant, with the vision of a prophet, unfurled the flag of Home Rule. She appealed for more recruits and Home Rule in the same breath. But a panicky Government, instead of feeling grateful to Mrs. Besant, interned her. How little they knew that her gospel made Indian extremism tread the path of constitutional

* Sir Thomas W. Holderness, late permanent Under-Secretary for India, in *These Eventful Years*, Vol. II.

† Ibid.

agitation ! If Mrs. Besant had not entered the field with her wonderful zeal, some of those who were groaning under the terrible war conditions might have joined the ranks of the "ghaderites."

*"The Bengal revolutionary party, which had been active for many years before the war, scored a notable success in August, 1914, by capturing a large consignment of pistols and ammunition in Calcutta. The arms were widely distributed and used in most of a series of outrages which followed for some months to come. We know now that the Bengal anarchists established communication both with German agents and with agents of the revolutionary party outside India known by the name of their propagandist journal as the "Ghadr" (mutiny) party. They drew money from America and also from German sources, and made plans for running arms and ammunition into India and starting an armed rising ; but the conspiracy was disclosed and the leaders eventually arrested. The influence of the *Ghadr* party was, however, more obvious and probably more dangerous in other directions.

"When the war broke out there had been a great stir among the Sikhs in America, and the Ghadr organisation began a campaign to induce them to return to start a revolution in India. In all about 8,000 Sikhs came back to the Punjab from the United States, Canada and far East, and we know that efforts were made to bring them all into the conspiracy. In most cases the attempts failed, and in respect of some three-quarters of the returning emigrants no action was necessary ; but most of the dangerous characters on their arrival were interned. Some who had merely been restricted to their homes disregarded the orders, and joining with the

* Montagu-Chelmsford Report, para. 21.

others who had not been interned, attempted to collect a following. In this they had little success, for the countryside, as a whole, remained loyal and quiet; but so long as they were active, the gangs were dangerous and made attempts to concert a rising in conjunction with any disaffected elements that they could find in regiments. Happily all miscarried, as in each case timely information was given. Political dacoities and murders of the type common in Bengal began to be a feature of the disturbance, and it was apparent that the Punjab and Bengal movements were in touch, and that the former derived direct stimulus from the latter."

Mrs. Besant grasped the situation and knew how to handle it. The Government wondered how an English lady could dare preach Home Rule in war time. The Government were out of touch. They did not know nor care what a disaster it would have been if the discontented people had become Ghaderites instead of turning Besantites. Mrs. Besant's paper, *New India*, "our little cruiser," as she called it, in war language, was "torpedoed." A heavy security of Rs.10,000 was demanded from it. But Mrs. Besant continued the struggle "in divine affection bold." In an impassioned address she said:

"India has still love for England. India does not want to break the British connection, but the England she loves is not the steel-framed England of the Press Act, the Defence of India Act, the Seditious Meetings Act, and the Criminal Law Amendment Act, and all those horrible enactments of 1818 and 1827. It is not the England of those things that we love, it is the England of Cromwell, of Hampden and Pym, of Milton and Shelley. It is the England that sheltered the threatened life of Mazzini, the England that welcomed Garibaldi by thousands in her streets as the liberator of Italy; the England

that has been sheltering every political refugee ; it is that England that we love. That is the England that, despite everything else, we still believe in ; but she is ignorant and blinded by the people who come here on superficial knowledge and confirm her in her blunders instead of enlightening her.

" England is fighting for her life, and has called India to help her with as much as India is able to give. Oh ! India would have given so much more, so many more men, so many more volunteers in order to help England in the day of her need. But England at her peril calls on Indian soldiers to fight for the liberty of Belgium and the sacredness of treaties, and then sends those soldiers back home to find their people still in bondage and treaties disregarded, torn in pieces and thrown aside. That which England fights for in Europe she must admit here. There is only one thing which makes a nation fit for freedom, and that is the heart to aspire after it, and the will which is determined to have it. England will not give you freedom, no nation has ever been given freedom ; but England will pass an Act of Parliament establishing freedom when she realises that you are in earnest, that you are tired of being played with, that you are determined to be free, and India's loyalty rests on a belief in the old England and not in the English bureaucracy, and her loyalty is the reasoned loyalty of freedom ; she has asked for her place in the Empire, and until that is granted, there will be danger in the path of progress."

The anger of the Government knew no bounds. They forgot that Mrs. Besant not long before had asked the Theosophists of the world to help England, as the England of Cromwell, Pym and Hampden was fighting to enthrone the goddess of equality, fraternity and liberty. The German Theosophists have not

forgotten, though some of them have perhaps forgiven, this appeal. During my short stay in Berlin I remember a section of the German Press reviving the memory of this bitter controversy with a view to prevent her admirers from giving Mrs. Besant a public reception in Berlin as her visit was announced in the Press. The Government did not care to think of the impression Mrs. Besant's appeal had on the American Theosophists who threw their weight in the scale of those who were combatting the unwisdom of America's neutrality. Nor did they care to consider how her agitation directed nationalist discontent along constitutional channels. Lord Pentland, the Governor of Madras, made a strong speech* that he was not going to stand any more nonsense from Mrs. Besant and her comrades-in-arms. If the agitation was not abandoned, His Excellency said he would resort to sharp, stern measures.

The Indian papers compared Lord Pentland to Indra† of the fable, who threatened a rustic with his thunderbolt, when the latter scornfully exclaimed "I know, Indrajī, you appeal to your thunderbolt to crush poor me. But you know when you use your thunderbolt you are angry and wrong." Mrs. Besant was supported by the entire Indian Press. She opened a furious campaign against the policy enunciated by the Governor "calculated deliberately to stifle constitutional agitation." "Congress-walas,"* Muslim-leaguers, Home Rulers, Tilakites, Hindu Sabhaites *et hoc genus omne* protested in a voice of thunder against the Madras satrap's *ipse dixit* that all thought or talk of early Home Rule must be forthwith abandoned. It was obvious that India's bile was roused!

* Madras Council proceedings, 24th May, 1917.

† A Hindu Diety whose weapons were thunder and lightning.

* Urdu slang for "Congressmen."

Lord Pentland thought he must have a straight talk with Mrs. Besant before taking action against her. Therefore His Excellency came by special train all the way from Ootacamund, the summer resort of the Madras Government, in the Nilgri hills. His Excellency left "Ooty" on Friday, 15th June; thunder and lightning followed by a heavy down-pour all the way down the hills till Coimbatore seemed to presage a clamorous future. When, however, he reached Madras it was a hot, summer day. The sun was literally roasting the people. His Excellency fixed an engagement with Mrs. Besant at midday in the Government House. His Excellency was very polite and anxious. He talked as an English country gentleman to a highly respected lady. The interview between two striking personalities ended with these words :

"I wish you to consider, Mrs. Besant, that we cannot discriminate and the whole of your activities will be stopped," said Lord Pentland.

"You have all the power, and I am helpless, and you must do what you like," replied Mrs. Besant. "There is just one thing I should like to say to Your Excellency and that is that I believe that you are striking the deadliest blow against the British Empire in India." Then, as they neared the door, Mrs. Besant added : "You will pardon my saying to Your Excellency that, as you are acting as the Governor, I have no personal feeling against Your Excellency."

Anticipating that her liberty would be curtailed, the prophet of Indian Home Rule had written a touching appeal to thousands of her followers and left it with the editor of the *Hindu* :

"I write plainly, for this is my last word. I go into enforced silence and imprisonment, because I

love India and have striven to arouse her before it was too late. It is better to suffer than to consent to wrong. It is better to lose liberty than to lose honour. I am old, but I believe that I shall see India win Home Rule before I die. If I have helped ever so little to the realisation of that glorious hope, I am more than satisfied. God save India !
Vande Mataram."

The prophecy was fulfilled. An hour after her interview came her internment.

The news of Mrs. Besant's internment enraged India beyond words. Angry meetings were held all over the country. India, it seemed, was on the verge of a revolution. A meeting of the Congress Committee was held in Lucknow in which the young men thought of organising a campaign of passive resistance. Older heads advised caution. Loyal Moderates, like Pundit Motilal Nehru,* who had so far kept out of the movement, joined Mrs. Besant's Home Rule League, lit up the torch and marched to the villages, rousing the people to a sense of their rights and wrongs. The Government in England began to see how repression made the meat it fed on. They thought it would be foolish to put their head into the sand like the ostrich.

On 29th August, 1917, the Secretary of State for India made the following announcement in the House of Commons :

"The policy of His Majesty's Government, with which the Government of India are in complete accord, is that of the increasing association of Indians in every branch of the administration and the gradual development of self-governing institutions with a view to the progressive realisation of responsible government in India, as an internal part of the

* Since turned Extremist ; to-day the Leader of the Opposition in the Indian Legislative Assembly.

British Empire. They have decided that substantial steps in this direction should be taken as soon as possible, and that it is of the highest importance as a preliminary to considering what these steps should be that there should be a free and informal change of opinion between those in authority at home and in India. His Majesty's Government accordingly decided, with His Majesty's approval, that I should accept the Viceroy's invitation to proceed to India to discuss these matters with the Viceroy and the Government of India, to consider with the Viceroy the views of local governments, and to receive with him the suggestions of representative bodies and others."

Mr. Montagu arrived in India amid the applause of the Indians and the curses of the Anglo-Indians—officials not excluded. The European Association, the European newspapers and their Tory and Unionist Allies in England, chanted a universal hymn of hate against "the wandering Jew," as one of them called him. The Anglo-Indian revolt reminded Indians of the Ilbert Bill crisis.* Well might Mr. Montagu have felt like Lord Ripon, who wrote to Kimberley:

"Englishmen in India had learnt nothing and forgotten nothing since the days they threatened to drown Macaulay in the Hugli,† or since they threatened to deport the Viceroy!"

A wholly different situation awaited Sir John Simon. Retired European civilians in England, British Parliament and Press, and the entire section of the Anglo-Indian Press blessed the Commission fervently. India, however, was not enthusiastic. The National Congress resolved that the Commission should be boycotted, not only politically but also socially, and

* 26th February, 1883.

† *Life of Lord Ripon*. By Lucien Wolf.

that the boycott should be demonstrated by an All-Indian "hartal" (strike) on the day of its landing in Bombay. The National Liberal Federation did not favour "hartal," judging from past experience that they led to violence and riots, and unnecessary loss of lives, but were adamant in regard to boycott both social and political. In the Muslim League had occurred a split, one section which met in Calcutta resolving on the observance of boycott, and another which met in Lahore resolving on co-operation with the Commission. The Calcutta Muslim League was led by Mr. M. A. Jinnah, a prominent barrister of Bombay, and the leader of the Independent party in the Assembly. The Punjab branch was led by Sir Mohamed Shafi, a Lahore barrister, who was formerly a member of the Viceroy's Executive Council. The Anglo-Indian Press scorned the boycott. There was no dearth of loyal, non-politically minded Indians, depressed classes and politically-minded Anglo-Indians, they said, who extended to Sir John Simon and his companions a hearty welcome. Sir John, however, who obviously came to conciliate the politically-minded people in response to whose demands the Reforms were introduced, had no doubt in his mind as to the position.

"Evidence accumulates," wrote Sir John to the Viceroy, "that throughout India there is much uncertainty, considerable misunderstanding and complete, though doubtless genuine, misconception of our intentions."*

* Letter from Sir John Simon, Chairman Royal Commission to His Excellency the Viceroy . . . dated New Delhi, 7th February, 1928.

CHAPTER II

MISUNDERSTANDINGS AND MISCONCEPTIONS

How did the misunderstandings and misconceptions arise to which the Chairman of the Commission referred in his now-famous letter to the Viceroy? The responsibility for them must rest on other shoulders than those of the present Viceroy, who has impressed Indians as a perfect English gentleman whose solid asset lies in his simplicity and character.

On 29th September, 1921, discussion arose in the Legislative Assembly on the appointment of a committee consisting of officials and non-officials, including members of the Indian Legislature, to consider the best way to bring about provincial autonomy in all the Governor's provinces and to introduce responsibility in the central Government and to make recommendations.

The Home Member, replying on behalf of the Government of India, did not take shelter under Section 84 of the Government of India Act; nor did he seek refuge in the opinion expressed in the Report of the Joint Select Committee of both Houses of Parliament that "until the expiration of ten years" neither a Statutory Commission should be appointed nor changes of substance made in the interval, whether in the franchise or in the domain of the Provincial Governments in relation to the transferred and the reserved subjects.

Sir William Vincent, a talented and sympathetic official, explained, in his capacity as Home Member,

the attitude of the Government of India, which was prepared to meet the non-official wishes.

"I do not say for a moment," he explained, "that these decisions are like the law of the Medes and the Persians, or that they cannot be altered, nor do I personally believe that the present transitional scheme of the Government can last long as is expected. I think we, in the Government of India, appreciate that as much as anyone; indeed, the Secretary of State dealing with this matter himself said: If there is a remarkable, unforeseen development in Indian conditions in the short space of ten years, because ten years is a very short time, the Act does not tie the hands of Parliament, and there can always be a Commission in the interval."

At the end of the debate, Sir William Vincent suggested the following formula, which was finally adopted as an amended resolution:

"That this Assembly recommends to the Governor-General in Council that he should convey to the Secretary of State for India the view of this Assembly that the progress made by India on the path of responsible Government warrants a re-examination and revision of the Constitution at an earlier date than 1929."

This resolution was unanimously adopted and report of the debate despatched to Whitehall. It took a whole year for Whitehall to digest the modest resolution of a Legislature of the Moderates. The Legislature at this time had been boycotted by Mahatma Gandhi and the National Congress. The gentlemen of the Legislature had throughout loyally endorsed the Government's severe campaign to extirpate the tribe of non-co-operators. Therefore, if there was imagination in Whitehall, the Moderate demand

would have been met and the position of the friends of British Raj in the country would have been very much strengthened.

On 2nd November, 1922, Lord Peel, the Secretary of State, sent his dispatch to the Government of India, in which he held that the demand of the Assembly was premature, as in his opinion the possibilities of progress under the existing constitution had not been exhausted and the merits and capabilities of the electorates had not been adequately put to test in the short period during which the Reforms were working. He further held that the entire machinery of the Montagu Constitution must be allowed to work for some time longer, so that it would be examined in the light of increased experience. Lord Peel's dispatch really asked the Indian politicians to look to the Government of India Act itself which contained ample scope for the gratification of their ambitions.

The dispatch of the Secretary of State was ironically applauded by the Extremists, the non-co-operators and the Nationalists of the Congress.

"It is a good kick to those who lick the boots of the Government," they said with contemptuous satisfaction. "Those who betray their country and strengthen the stranglehold of the stranger-within-the-gate deserve no consideration."

Lord Peel was sincerely congratulated for driving one more nail into the coffin of Moderatism. The Congress was urged to revise its own negative attitude of boycott so that it might crush out of political existence the anæmic Moderates who believed in the generosity of foreigners and not in the gospel of self-help. The conservative cabinet were eulogised by the Extremists for helping the latter to expose the futility of political mendicancy. The Moderates were furiously attacked as waiting to swallow any crumbs that might fall from the master's table. The result

was that the Moderates, known as Liberals, were wiped out at the next general Election in 1923. The Government secured Liberal representation by nominating Sir Sivaswamy Iyer and Sir Chimanlal Setalvad to the Assembly. Both of them were ex-members of the Madras and Bombay Governments respectively, the former during the Morley-Minto régime and the latter during the Montagu era.

In the beginning of 1924, when the Assembly met, the Swarajists under the leadership of Pundit Motilal Nehru modified the old moderate demand for a Royal Commission and said what India did not want was a Royal Commission to enquire into her fitness for further reforms, as, in their opinion, India was as fit as England. The Pundit suggested the summoning without delay of a round table Conference to draw up the Indian Constitution which, he said, should be submitted to a newly-elected Legislature whose recommendation should be adopted by the British Parliament without any material modifications. India, he urged, should be treated as other Dominions were treated in the matter. The Congress would be no party, he warned, to anything short of a complete and permanent settlement of the Indian question. They were tired of the plan of giving autonomy in dribblets. Any Royal Commission to extend existing reforms by instalments would meet with resistance.

Pundit Motilal Nehru's amendment thus modified the original resolution for a Royal Commission. Diwan Bahadur Ranga Chari, a leading Independent with sane views and a head for constructive purposes, who was the mover of that resolution, himself accepted the amendment and voted for it. Pundit Motilal Nehru's proposition was passed on the 18th February, 1924, seventy-six non-officials voting for and forty-eight (twenty-three officials and twenty-five non-officials) voting against. The Government, however,

would not naturally accept that position. They were not prepared to go beyond what Lord Peel, the Secretary of State, had indicated two years ago, of exhausting the possibilities of expansion under the Statute.

The Indian politicians had counted much on the advent of Labour to power. They had hoped Lord Olivier, the new Secretary of State, would take a broader view than Lord Peel. But the latter made it clear by his action that, except in regard to the manner of expression, there could be really no difference between the Socialists and the Imperialists in regard to their Indian policy. He incidentally also disproved the apprehensions and allegations of those that the Socialist Government had made no secret of their sympathy with Gandhi. This allegation has been constantly levelled at the much-maligned Socialists, whose Indian policy, by the way, was more cautious than even that of the Conservatives. They not only acted on Lord Peel's dispatch but sanctioned the application of the Bengal Regulation III of 1818, and the issue of a new Ordinance according to which suspected men could be interned or imprisoned without trial, which could not be put to Lord Peel's discredit.

Sir Malcolm Hailey, who had succeeded Sir William Vincent as Home Member, showed the willingness of the Government to conduct an enquiry on lines indicated two years before by Lord Peel. Close on the heels of this statement came the appointment of an official Committee :

To enquire into the difficulties arising from, or defects inherent in, the working of the Government of India Act and the rules thereunder in regard to the Central Governments and the Government of the Governor's provinces, and to investigate the feasibility and desirability of securing remedies for such difficulties or defects, consistent with the structure, policy and purposes of the Act,

- (a) by action taken under the Act and the Rules, or
- (b) by such amendments of the Act as appear necessary to rectify any administrative imperfections.

The above Committee consisted of Sir Alexander Muddiman, who succeeded Sir Malcolm Hailey as Home Member, Sir Mahomed Shafi, the Maharaja of Burdwan, Sir Arthur Froom, Sir Henry Moncrieff Smith, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, Sir Sivaswamy Iyer, Mr. M. A. Jinnah and Dr. R. P. Paranjpaye. In fairness to the Government, it must be said that they invited the Honourable the Leader of the Opposition, Pundit Motilal Nehru, to join this enquiry Committee. The Pundit, however, declined to serve on that Committee for the following reasons, which he stated in his letter replying to the Government :*

“ I have carefully considered the terms of reference to the proposed Committee and have come to the conclusion that no enquiry within the limit, scope and extent prescribed can yield satisfactory results. It will no doubt be possible for the Committee to discover the difficulties arising from or defects inherent in the working of the Government of India Act and the rules thereunder and suggest remedies within the limitations laid down. But it is obvious that no such remedies can meet the requirements of the situation. A reference to the terms of the Resolution adopted by the Legislative Assembly, on the 18th February, 1924, will show that the action contemplated by the Resolution must necessarily go beyond the structure, policy and purpose of the Act, and that the object in view cannot be served by merely rectifying any adminis-

* Legislative Assembly Debates, 14th March, 1925, Vol. V. No. 34, page 2348.

trative imperfections. The proposed enquiry would perhaps be justifiable if its real and avowed purpose were to collect evidence to be subsequently placed before a representative conference constituted in the manner described in the Resolution of the Assembly, with unrestricted powers to propose such changes in the constitution as the circumstances required. But as I read the Press Communiqué it commits those who agree to serve on the committee to the structure, policy and purpose of the Act, and gives no indication of any intention to hold a subsequent conference with wider powers, or to take any action beyond that necessary to rectify administrative imperfections under the Act and the rules as they stand. For these reasons, while thanking the Governor-General in Council for the invitation, I regret my inability to serve on the Committee constituted in the manner and for the purpose set out in the Press Communiqué."

The Committee first assembled in Simla on 4th August, 1924. They carried on a brisk work, examined weighty witnesses and documents and formed their conclusions, which they embodied in their reports on the 3rd of December, 1924.

A unanimous report could not be written, because sharp differences divided the members. Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru,* Sir Sivaswamy Iyer, Mr. Jinnah,† and Dr. Paranjpaye‡ wrote a dissenting report in which they expressed their views in detail on the difficulties experienced in the working of the present system and its inherent constitutional defects. Sir

* Formerly a member of the Government of India.

† President of Muslim League and leader of the Independent party in the Assembly.

‡ Senior wrangler of Cambridge, for some time Minister of Education in Bombay Government, now a member of the Council of the Secretary of State for India.

Mahomed Shafi, who had just completed his term of office as a member of the Government of India, in a strange statement to the Press, explained that he had signed the majority report in his official capacity, but now that he had resumed his non-official life, he was wholly in favour of the conclusions of the minority. That conclusion is worth quoting, as it represents the irreducible minimum demand of the people.

“While we agree with the majority that the constitution, as a whole, requires to be worked by reasonable men in a reasonable spirit if deadlocks are not to ensue, we venture to think that this will hold good in the case of any other constitution. In our opinion, the system of Dyarchy was during the first three years everywhere worked in the Legislatures by men most of whom were professedly its friends and who generally speaking tried to work it in that spirit of reasonableness which is referred to by the majority of our colleagues, and it is no exaggeration to say—indeed this is also the testimony of several local governments which we have quoted above—that generally a spirit of harmony and co-operation prevailed between the Legislature and the Executive, notwithstanding the fact that the atmosphere outside was for some time markedly unfavourable. The Indian Ministers and Members of Executive Councils also, upon whom new opportunities of service were conferred, appear to us to have been, within the sphere of their Executive duties, equally eager to work the Constitution in the same spirit of reasonableness, and yet differing from the majority of our colleagues we have been forced to the conclusion that the present system has failed and in our opinion it is incapable of yielding better results in future. The system has been severely tested during the course of this year and its practical breakdown in two provinces, viz.,

Bengal and the Central Provinces, as a result of the opinions of the majority of the members of the Councils of those two provinces who refuse to believe in the efficacy of Dyarchy and the tension prevailing in the other Legislatures for similar reasons, point to the conclusion that the constitution requires being overhauled. It has failed, in our opinion, for several reasons : (1) There are the inherent defects of the constitution which, though theoretically obvious at its inception, have now been clearly shown by actual experience to exist. (2) The Ministers' position has not been one of real responsibility. (3) While in a few provinces the practice of effective joint deliberation between the two halves of the Government has been followed, in several of them it has not been. (4) Excepting to a partial extent in Madras, almost everywhere else the Ministers have been dealt with individually by Governors and not on the footing of collective responsibility. (5) The close inter-connection between the subjects of administration which have been divided into ' reserved ' and ' transferred ' has made it extremely difficult for Legislature at times to make in practice a distinction between the two sections of the Government, with the result that the policy and administration of the Reserved half of the Government have not infrequently been potent factors in determining the attitude of the Legislatures towards the Ministers and have also in our opinion prejudiced the growth and strength of parties in the Councils. (6) The Meston Award has crippled the resources of the provinces. It has been the corner-stone of the entire financial system, and it has prevented Ministers from developing nation-building Departments to the extent which would have enabled them to produce any substantial results. (7) The defects of the Rules which we have noticed before and the constitution and the working

of the Finance Department 'have put a severe strain on the system."

The criticism which the Montagu-Chelmsford Report made of the Congress League Scheme has been demonstrated to be true in actual experience of the defects of having an irremovable Executive with an elected majority in the Legislature as is the case in the Legislative Assembly under the present constitution :

"An Executive which is independent of its Legislature," says the Report, "as the Indian Executives have hitherto been, can carry on the Government in virtue of authority derived from without ; a party Executive can govern because it interprets the will of the people as represented by the Assembly, but wherever, as in Canada or Malta, attempts have been made to set up an irremovable Executive and a popular Assembly, acute conflict has ensued and has resulted either in advance to popular government or a return to autocracy."

It is scarcely necessary to point out that since the above passage was written, responsible government has been introduced in Malta with certain reservations relating to matters of Imperial interests.

"We think that the Bihar Government has correctly summed up the position in the provinces by saying that Dyarchy is working 'creakily' and 'minor remedies may cure a creak or two.' We have examined in detail the sections of the Government of India Act and the Rules made thereunder with a view to see how far 'creaks' discovered can be 'cured.' We are satisfied that this process, though it may lead to some improvement of the administrative machinery in some respects, will not produce any substantial results. We do not think that the suggested amendments, if effected, will afford 'valuable training towards responsible govern-

ment ' or will provide any solution of the difficulties which we have discussed in our chapter on political conditions, or that they will strengthen the position of the Provincial Governments in relation to their Legislatures, or that of the Central Government in relation to the Assembly. The majority of our colleagues say that no alternative transitional system has been placed before us. We think that no such alternative transitional system can be devised which can satisfactorily solve the administrative or political difficulties which have been brought to our notice. To our mind the proper question to ask is not whether any *alternative transitional* system can be devised, but whether the constitution should not be put on a permanent basis, with provisions for automatic progress in the future, so as to secure stability in the government and willing co-operation of the people. We can only express the hope that a serious attempt may be made at an early date to solve the question. That this attempt should be made—whether by the appointment of a Royal Commission with freer terms of reference and larger scope of enquiry than ours or by any other agency—is a question which we earnestly commend to the notice of the Government."

The Muddiman Committee Report was discussed in the Legislative Assembly on 14th March, 1925. Sir Alexander Muddiman assured the House that one of the matters that must necessarily come under the consideration of the Secretary of State during His Excellency the Viceroy's visit would be the report of the Reforms Enquiry Commission, which was obviously one of the more important outstanding matters with the Government of India.

Lord Reading, the Viceroy, and Lord Birkenhead, the new Secretary of State, had several conversations regarding the Indian situation. Judging by the result,

both the Viceroy and the Secretary of State had probably agreed that it would be a wise policy to sail slowly as there were rocks and breakers ahead, and that there should be no hurry to precipitate a Commission unless there was evidence of more co-operation from the Opposition. The Swarajists, for instance, still persisted in their wrecking tactics. They did not recognise the Viceroy, invitations to whose levée they had declined in a body as a protest against the non-settlement of the Indian question. They rejected the demands for grants during the Budget discussion on the ground of "grievances before supplies." Things would improve, said Lord Birkenhead,

"if a spirit of cheerful and loyal co-operation was generally exhibited on the one hand, or if, on the other, grave and glaring defects disclosed themselves."

What graver disclosure of a glaring defect could there be, came the answer from the Bengal Nationalists, who are the head and front of the political movement in India, than the suspension of Dyarchy itself in Bengal? The Ministers in Bengal were overthrown on the ground that Dyarchy could no longer be worked, and the Government had to carry on the administration of the transferred half without the help either of Ministers or the Legislature. This, however, was not paving the way for a better understanding, without which, the Government felt, the Reforms Commission could not be precipitated :

"I cannot find the desired encouragement to those who, like myself, have been seeking evidence of greater co-operation and goodwill," said His Excellency the Viceroy in addressing the Legislature on 20th January, 1920, "there is yet time, however, for a more satisfactory response. In the ensuing session, as the proceedings of this Assembly develop,

I trust there may be found a clear manifestation of an attitude as generous and as well-intentioned as I verily believe was that which prompted the appeal. I shall continue to watch events here and throughout the country with deep interest, and it is my earnest prayer that the hopes, to which I still cling, may not be disappointed, and that a new era may dawn on Indian progress, an era of more sympathetic understanding, more widespread trust and more universal goodwill."

The loyal Liberals replied that they had co-operated cheerfully and loyally, incurring much public obloquy, reducing the strength of their own following in the country. They had attended the Viceregal levée. They had taken part in every official and non-official function. They had opposed the wrecking tactics of the uncompromising Extremists. Did the Secretary of State and the Viceroy mean that they would not respond until the Extremist leopards changed their spots? Many of them were compulsorily made to change the spot literally when they were marched from their houses to the prisons, but a political metamorphosis seemed impossible. The Ethiopian might change his skin, but not the Extremist ex-convicts their convictions. They deplored that the Government should be playing into the Extremist hands by repeatedly declining to listen to the advice of the Moderates, who were being depleted of all their moderation.

Mr. Jinnah, the leader of the Independent Group in the Assembly, put it to the Viceroy and the Secretary of State :

Now, Sir, I ask the Government and the Home Member, who represents the Government here to-day, what does he want? Does he want that a certain section, a certain body of politicians who have committed themselves to a particular course of action,

should give up their course of action according to your wish? And because they will not make a declaration that they are willing to give up that course of conduct, whatever may be the opinion of the whole country or the rest of the country, until those particular men eat their words, will you continue saying there is no co-operation? I ask the Government to consider this: Is there a single political organisation, is there a single political body in the country that has not pressed the Government at least for a Royal Commission to be appointed forthwith? Are you going to treat the rest of the opinion in this country with contempt, because you have a certain section that you consider impossible or irreconcilable, or that will not yield to you in the exact manner in which you desire? Is that your answer to the whole of India? You ask me to get what? Every party to agree? I ask you, do you honestly mean that that is possible, that it will ever be possible in India or in any other country in the world that all parties must agree, and till then the Government will not move?"

The Moderates, who had hoped that a Royal Commission on Reforms would be sent out to India in the winter of 1925, were also disappointed. The attitude of the Government had exasperated them, and their leader,* who owed his presence in the Assembly to the nomination of the Viceroy spoke more in sorrow than in anger as follows:

"It is said that the Government of India Act laid down certain conditions, one of which was that further progress would be dependent on the degree of co-operation received. Now, the lack of co-operation on the part of the people is often put forward as an excuse for not taking a step forward.

* Sir Sivaswamy Iyer.

I have asked before on the floor of this House and I ask it again, was there not co-operation on the part of the first Assembly? It may, perhaps, be said that there was no doubt co-operation on the part of one section of the people, but there has been no co-operation on the part of other sections. What is to be the extent of the co-operation which, according to you, constitutes the condition precedent to any further move? Is it co-operation on the part of every one of the three hundred millions, or is it co-operation on the part of all classes and communities of the people without any single exception at all? I submit that it cannot possibly have been the intention that there should be proof of universal co-operation on the part of all the people of this country. We have shown that there are politicians in this country who have been willing to co-operate and who did successfully co-operate with Government during the lifetime of the first Assembly. The plea of lack of co-operation on the part of the people is, I submit, only an excuse for not moving forward. If you consider again that question, what it is that has caused lack of co-operation on the part of other sections, it is simply this that they do not trust your declarations. They do not believe that at the end of the statutory period of ten years they are going to get these Reforms. What has been done by the Government so far has certainly not gone to dispel these suspicions as to their intentions."

The position of the Government, however, seemed unchanged. The words of Lord Reading clearly contained an admonition :

"The inquiry contemplated by the Act will be a genuine and an impartial inquiry. Nothing will be prejudged. It will proceed upon the facts of the situation as ascertained upon the evidence produced to the tribunal. And here I must remind you of

the words of the Preamble to the Government of India Act, which have already been quoted by the Secretary of State: 'And whereas the action of Parliament in such matters must be guided by the *co-operation received from those on whom new opportunities of service will be conferred, and by the extent to which it is found that confidence can be reposed in their sense of responsibility.*' If those are to be the principles to guide the Commission to its judgment, I cannot think, as a friend of India, that it should commence its inquiries immediately." (The italics are mine.)

These words were obviously meant for the Congress, which would not listen. Unlike the Moderates, the Congressmen had deliberately thrown away the opportunities of service; they wanted a revolution. They had no confidence in the Government and did not expect any confidence in return. The Government, by waiting for the Congress to change, succeeded in driving the Moderates mad. When the terms and personnel of the Simon Commission were announced, it was not the Congress which first declared boycott, but the Moderates and Liberals, who had hitherto co-operated loyally and faithfully. Parliament had excluded them from the Commission, notwithstanding their tried policy of co-operation with and confidence in the Government. "We feel like Cardinal Wolsey," said the most eminent of them.

CHAPTER III

THE VICEROY'S ANNOUNCEMENT

IN informed political circles interested in Indian affairs, it was well known that the Conservative Cabinet had decided to precipitate the appointment of the Indian Commission on Reforms in 1928 instead of awaiting the expiry of the Statutory period of ten years of the working of the Reforms. The Conservatives, whose purpose is to conserve and preserve British Imperialism, could not be expected to leave the decision in regard to the appointment of an Indian Commission until after the next General Election of 1929, as this was not a matter which could be trifled with or left to a less responsible party which might succeed them. The Socialists, because of their extraordinary commitments against Imperialism and their repeated promises to India of granting her the right of self-determination, welcomed the decision of the Conservatives to forestall the General Elections, as it would save them, should they be returned to power, from the awkward position of violating in action their wild talk out of office, in which they themselves perhaps never believed. They were willing, therefore, to render every help to the Government and bless the Commission by giving it two of their own men. Well might Lord Birkenhead say with satisfaction :*

“ If the organised political opinion—a very small fringe of the whole of India—chooses to maintain itself in silent, boycotting aloofness, nevertheless

* Speech delivered by Lord Birkenhead at Doncaster on 17th February.

the work of that Commission will be performed under this Government or *under any Government of whatever political complexion, that may succeed it.*" (The Italics are mine.)

In the same speech, Lord Birkenhead paid a tribute to Mr. Ramsay Macdonald, who, as the principal opposition leader

"from the first had carried out what he conceived to be his duty, never hesitating for a moment. All the responsible Labour leaders," added Lord Birkenhead, "had taken the same course."

He had to qualify his statement, because at least one ex-Member of the Labour Cabinet had taken the Indian view of boycott. Some familiar writers in the Labour Press had also taken exception to the attitude of Mr. Ramsay Macdonald and some other Socialist leaders for acting against the spirit and letter of their unanimous resolutions on India adopted from time to time in their party conferences. The credit for manipulating Labour, must, of course, belong to Lord Birkenhead.

With no small satisfaction, the anxious Europeans and officials in India welcomed the appointment of the Commission in the period of office of the present Cabinet and the present Secretary of State. The officials and Europeans in India had not half so great a dread of the Nationalist movement or the Indian agitation as of the Socialists, proud of their anti-imperial and pro-Swarajist ways.* One of them, a typical honest and outspoken representative of that group, Sir Michael O'Dwyer, has given expression to their feelings :

"If there is little danger of our being driven out of India by force, there is a real danger of our losing

* *India as I knew it*, 1885 to 1925, page 423. By Sir Michael O'Dwyer.

India by negligence, or abandoning our trust there through a misguided sentimentality. There is now a strong Government in power with a clear and sane outlook on Indian affairs."

The strength of that Government, the clearness of its vision, and the sanity of its outlook, were brought out in the very careful manner in which even the details regarding the appointment of the Indian Statutory Commission were conceived and carried out. In the first place, there were to be no Indians on that Commission, because no Indian would be so mean as not to ask for Home Rule for his country. And if there be such an Indian, no Englishman is so foolish as to mistake him for a representative Indian of character. Indians, therefore, were excluded on the ground that either they could not be impartial judges of themselves on matters fundamentally affecting their country's destiny, or the best of them had committed themselves on that question so completely and so minutely that it was impossible to find among first-class Indians men whose views were not public. Having known their views, where was the point in placing them on a Commission, unless the purpose was to begin with a quarrel and mar every chance of a unanimous report?

Lord Birkenhead vigorously justified the exclusion of Indians in a speech in the House of Lords, which hostile critics have not had the generosity to concede was an honest utterance of a perfect English gentleman. Though they have dismissed it as the prejudiced pronouncement of an able advocate, I have no hesitation in saying that Lord Birkenhead has, in excluding Indians from the Commission, been animated by honest considerations worthy of an upright man. Lord Birkenhead could easily have appointed a Hindu flunkey, a Mohamedan toady and a Parsee boot-licker on the Commission who could have cheerfully given their signatures to a report postponing India's

Home Rule to the Greek Kalends. Even the best Indo-British Commission would have been boycotted by the Congress, as it has no faith in Commission or Committees. But in and outside the Congress-fold there are men who believe the only way to solve the Indian problem is for representative Indians and Englishmen to meet round a table in conference and discuss and decide India's place in the Empire once for all and agree to stages of more or less automatic transfer of power, instead of being forced to yield by every wild agitation, which would only accumulate the rubbish of racial hatred.

"When England claims to rule India," they say, "and at the same time is willing to transfer that rule from British on to Indian shoulders, it is for her to send out a Commission consisting of her chosen men to examine things on the spot and reach conclusions which they deem fit. If India has repudiated the claim—as a powerful section of the Indian people has always done—it was for India not to recognise that Commission and to withdraw all help from it."

The position of that section which invariably claimed to be a sane one and which recognised the supreme right of Parliament was different. If it condemned the Conservative Government for the exclusion of Indians from that Commission, it was because it felt that having co-operated with the British Raj all these long years, having been reviled by their own countrymen as "traitors," it had a right to ask for a place on the Commission. The Moderates were extremely disappointed because they were excluded. The Secretary of State's point, however, was that they, too, have proclaimed time and again in their Conferences that nothing short of complete responsibility in the Provinces and partial responsibility in the Central Government would satisfy them. Lord

Birkenhead thought that it was their obvious duty, therefore, to appear as witnesses before the Commission and persuade its members to their way of thinking. Further ample facilities were to be provided for them in other ways, through co-opted Committees to impress the Commission.

When the Viceroy's Cabinet discussed the personnel of the Commission opinion was divided. There must be differences of opinion in discussions, but no member, however strong his objection, carried his differences to the point of tendering his resignation. The Indian Law Member, Mr. S. R. Das, a cousin of the famous C. R. Das of Bengal vigorously supported the exclusion of Indians from the Commission.*

Having made sure of the support of his own Cabinet, the Viceroy sent for the Indian leaders, not with a view to consult them as to the constitution of the Royal Commission but to communicate to them in confidence what His Majesty's Government, with the concurrence of the Indian Government, had irrevocably decided. Leader after leader gave no encouragement to the Viceroy. One of them, whom I can name, frankly told the Viceroy :

"If this was really what your Excellency wanted, you need not have sent for me all the way from distant B——, and wasted so much of my time."

It was nearing lunch time, Mr. ——— was asked to lunch with the Viceroy, and conversation went on at lunch and after lunch. Let us imagine what the conversation was like :

The Viceroy : But then, you see, our idea was to produce "a unanimous report" which would carry weight with Parliament. You gentlemen who had committed yourself so much in regard to further advance had fixed views.

* Proceedings of the Legislative Assembly, 1928.

did not hesitate to take his Khaddar-box of exhibits with him for the Viceroy, though he did not find in Lord Irwin a ready customer." However, Gandhi had no interest in the subject-matter of the discussion, as he had practically left his political conscience in the keeping of the Swaraj Party—though the Mahatma must have been delighted to make the acquaintance of an English nobleman and the Viceroy must have been equally pleased to meet the magician, who with his tiny charka once offered battle to Manchester and the rest of the cloth manufacturers of the world.

Lord Irwin no doubt realised that it was easier to squeeze blood out of stones than get sympathy from the Congress for a British Royal Commission. What, however, His Excellency was not prepared for was the bitterness of the Moderates.

The Viceroy's announcement of the personnel and terms of reference of the Statutory Commission was resented by India and welcomed by Anglo-India. According to the terms of the Statute, the Commission was appointed to report to the British Parliament "as to whether and to what extent it is desirable to establish the principle of responsible government or to extend, modify or restrict the degree of the responsible Government at present existing in India." The quarrel was not with the terms of reference, but with the exclusion of Indians. If it was to be a purely Parliamentary Commission, were there not Indians in Parliament? If the Indian member in the House of Commons was not acceptable because of his communism, what of the Indian member in "another place," whose views on the future constitution of India were as unknown as those of Sir John Simon himself.*

The Anglo-Indians, Europeans, officials and non-

* Lord Sinha died in March, 1928, when he had come home on a private visit, which he incidentally used for the creation of a favourable atmosphere for the Simon Commission.

officials welcomed the announcement of the Viceroy and appreciated the principles followed by the Government in making their selection of the right type of men. First, party considerations were set aside, which was a great thing, because India could not be sacrificed from the Empire point of view to the exigencies of party politics at home. Secondly, the chairman of the Commission was an outstanding personality and represented the Liberals, who have a long and historic connection with the Reform policy in India. Thirdly, though the other members of the Commission were men "in the second flight," as the *Times* put it, brilliance was not everything and the Commission would be valuable to the members, giving them a great opportunity to understand the usefulness of India for the British Empire.

His Excellency the Viceroy, who was pleased with the European support, was anxious publicly to enlist corresponding Indian sympathy. He recognised the importance of securing for the enquiry genuine co-operation from the Indian public of all shades of opinion. He said that machinery would be created by means of which Indians would be made "parties to deliberations so nearly affecting the future of their country." Outlining the measures for securing the hearing of competent Indian thought, the Viceroy stated :

"First: it was proposed to invite the Central Legislature to appoint a committee from its elected and nominated non-official members to draw up its views and proposals in writing and lay them before the Commission for examination and that a similar procedure might be adopted with the Provincial Legislatures. Secondly: After the examination of the Commission's Report by the Government of India and His Majesty's Government, the latter should present the proposals to Parliament, but Parliament would not be asked to adopt them without

first giving a full opportunity for different Indian political schools of thought to contribute their views on them. A Joint Committee of both Houses of Parliament would hear the views of the Central Legislature and other bodies by means of delegations. Lord Irwin hoped that this carefully thought out plan would 'assure to Indians a better opportunity than they could have enjoyed in any other way of influencing the passage of these great events, for not only will they, through the representatives of the Indian Legislature, be enabled to express themselves freely to the Commission itself, but it will also be within their power to challenge in detail or principle any of the proposals made before the Parliamentary Joint Committee and to advocate their own solutions, for at this stage, so far as Parliament is concerned, the whole field will be still open.' "

Some Indian critics remarked that no originality could be claimed for this procedure, because a similar step had been taken by Mr. Montagu ten years ago when he was Secretary of State for India. The supporters of the Government claimed that the British Government's anxiety to consider Indian opinion was shown by this "remarkable and generous constitutional precedent" of inviting India's representatives to pass their judgment on the Government's proposals before being taken to Parliament for final adoption. Confidence was expressed by the semi-official Press that after a full and mature consideration of the scheme, there would be an end to any future talk of boycott, which a partial knowledge of the Government's proposals had tended to foster. Nobody expected the Congress to take up a "sane" attitude, but every official and non-official European hoped better of the loyal Moderates, who had experience of administration and who had helped the Government either as Ministers

or as members of the Governor's and Viceroy's Executive Councils or as responsible leaders of the public during the strenuous days of the non-co-operation movement. But, alas ! it was the latter class of people on whose sobriety and experience the Government had counted that first unfurled the flag of revolt.

The non-co-operators did not feel disappointed with the exclusion of Indians from the Commission. Even had they been given a place they would not have served on it—though Mr. V. J. Patel had told a different story to Mr. Baldwin and Lord Birkenhead. Strangely enough, the President of the Assembly had told these great English statesmen that the appointment of Gandhi as a member of the Royal Commission would have ensured co-operation of the Indians. Would Gandhi have agreed to serve on the Commission ? If the British Government had made that offer and the Saint, who is not supposed to be interested in politics and Reforms, had refused, the complaint of the Moderates that Indians were deliberately excluded could not stand. The Moderates had most certainly hoped that they would have been given in the terms of the Montagu announcement fresh opportunities to co-operate with the British Commission. Their anger on their exclusion from the Commission was so great that they denounced it in language the severity of which revealed the intensity of their disappointment.

A popular figure in Simla, a favourite of the officials and the Anglo-Indian Press, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, fired the first shot after the Viceroy's announcement. This was surprising. That a gentleman of Dr. Sapru's responsibility, who was a member of the Viceroy's Cabinet, should be preaching boycott like a mad undergraduate was "curious," as I was told by a good American lady, the wife of a high English official. Let us try to understand what made this innocent man of the non-co-operation era leave the Garden of Eden. Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru said :

“Whoever else amongst my countrymen may be surprised at the decision of His Majesty’s Government I am not, for my recent visit to England has forced on my mind that nothing substantial can be expected from the India Office as it is constituted. English opinion in England has hardened itself against us, and only those Indians can realise it who have recently been there or have talked to English politicians or have been in touch with the many other Indians who have recently been to England. I have no confidence in Lord Birkenhead or the India Office, and I think it is a misfortune that the Commission should come to be appointed by the present Government. I am under no delusion as to the attitude of Labour or Liberals either, but I venture to think that the Labour Government would not have defied Indian opinion and treated it with the contempt with which Mr. Baldwin’s Government and Lord Birkenhead have treated it.”

Sir Abdur Rahim, who was a distinguished Judge of the Madras High Court, and later on a member of the Bengal Governor’s Executive Council, and to-day occupies an eminent place as a Muslim leader, said :

“The Statutory Commission announcement in the Viceroy’s statement implies an abrupt, wholly unexpected and most momentous departure from the attitude which the British Government of various political parties have been repeatedly defining towards India and Indians. It amounts to this. India’s sons are not to have any responsible part in co-operation with men of the British race in recommending a suitable constitution for their country. This, indeed, is a violation to start with of the policy of the very Government of India Act of 1919 under which the Commission has been appointed. The proposed conference with a select committee of the Central Legislature after the Commission has pre-

pared its report does not minimize the significance of the fact that recommendations will be those of the Commission and of none else. For a long time past there has been no important Commission dealing with the affairs of India without Indian representation. The Islington Public Services Commission, to which allusion has been made in some newspapers (and of which Sir Abdur Rahim was a member), consisted of eleven members, of whom three were Indians and one Anglo-Indian, exclusive of those who were co-operated assessors or members, whatever you may call them, who contributed hardly anything to the deliberations of the recommendations of the Commission itself. No doubt, on some of the constitutional and political issues that will have to be considered by the Statutory Commission acute differences of opinion do exist among Indian politicians, but the proper course was to include in the Commission the leaders of different schools of political thought in India, say five men, and to saddle them with the responsibility of agreeing upon an adequate and workable scheme of responsible government in collaboration with English statesmen."

Lala Lajpat Rai, the great Hindu leader, said :

"The announcement made by the Viceroy as to the scheme and personnel of the Royal Commission cannot be accepted by any Indian who has the slightest vestige of self-respect either for himself or for his country. The scheme is a flat negation of India's right to have a determining voice in the settlement of her future constitution. The reasons given by the Viceroy for the exclusion of Indians from the Commission are neither sound nor weighty. He must have a poor opinion of our intelligence and of our understanding if he thinks that these arguments would satisfy any self-respecting Indian. This

announcement has convinced us that the declaration of August 1917 was not sincere and that the preamble of the Reforms Act of 1919 was only farcical. The scheme of investigation sketched out in the Government Communiqué is of the same nature. It is a mere eyewash and the worst possible scheme which could be formulated, from the Indian point of view."

Col. Gidney, M.L.A., an outspoken representative of the Anglo-Indian and domiciled community in the Assembly, declared that a purely Parliamentary Commission was eminently suitable and practicable, and the assistance that the Commission would have from the committees of legislatures was a vital part of the scheme, and he thought it was a pity that the Commission had been prejudged before all details were known.

"We have a Commission which will have at its disposal first-hand information from the representatives of all parties and I hope from all important communities. Surely a Commission working on these lines should command the confidence and respect of every political, every party and every community in India. If it does not, the sooner India is told that she is not fit for any further advance in self-government the better. Of this much I feel certain that when the first storm of opposition has passed, if Indians decide to boycott this Commission it will be their own fault if the giver of Reforms to India, namely, the British Parliament, refuses to proceed with the Commission and puts the hands of the Reform clock back."

Col. Gidney emphasised that no community had rendered greater service during the war than his, and none was more prejudicially affected by the Reforms than his community. They constituted a very powerful skilled labour community in India and formed two-

thirds of the second line of defence of the British Army in India. And as the central and provincial legislatures were not likely to elect the members of his community for the select committee, the Viceroy and Governors should be allowed to nominate three or four communal representatives to each of the select committees to represent minorities such as the domiciled community, the depressed classes and Indian Christians.

Mr. Arthur Moore, a brilliant journalist with an independent outlook, a fine product of Oxford, who represents in the Indian Assembly the English community of Calcutta, said :

“ I should have preferred a mixed Commission, and my impression is that a majority of unofficial Englishmen would also. Modern business men dislike whatever accentuates racialism, but I am chiefly interested in the possibilities of the Joint Committee and I do trust Indian leaders won't act impulsively and commit themselves to a boycott. They can express their disappointment fully, but why make the old mistake of tying their hands in advance ? I believe people are sick to death of the word now and it is evident the country can't afford more negation. If you unite in trying to increase the position of the Joint Committee you will succeed. For years one paper* has steadily urged that the most important matter is not what body shall do the spade work of drafting the revised constitution, but that draft must be submitted to some truly representative body in India for consideration and, if necessary, amended before going to Parliament, and that unless the principal parties in India first agree to work it, till then it will not be worth while for a Parliament to convert it into a statute and it

* *The Statesman* of Calcutta.

will be better to continue as we are till some such agreement is reached. The paper has repeatedly put forward this very suggestion of a committee of the legislature. That seems to me the most hopeful line of advance."

Diwan Bahadur Rangachariar, formerly Vice-President of the Assembly, an advocate of early marriage, a favourite of the officials, a stalwart who impressed even Miss Mayo favourably, said it was

"a great blunder on the part of the British Cabinet to exclude Indians from a body which is authoritatively to recommend to His Majesty's Government what future development in the Indian constitution should be."

While giving full respectful credit to Lord Irwin's sincerity and honesty of purpose, he deplored that His Excellency could not exercise greater influence with the British Cabinet. While they, at a distance, could not gauge the situation correctly His Excellency had ample opportunity, though a belated one, of knowing how strong was the feeling among the politically-minded Indians on the subject.

I have given above the various shades of opinion, the views of an ex-Member of the Government, a Muslim statesman, a Hindu leader, a representative of the Anglo-Indian community, a non-official spokesman of Englishmen in India and a mild representative of the Moderate stalwarts.

Before the Viceroy's announcement, Mrs. Annie Besant, like a prophet, called out to the people for whom she has struggled and suffered to stand united but dignified in their opposition.

"India's only hope," wrote Mrs. Besant, "lies in her unity. Let party feelings vanish, all past

quarrels be forgotten, let factional turmoils cease and one nation stand out, too strong to be angry, too serene to be stormy, too mighty in her trust in God and righteousness to be turbulent. Heaviness may endure for the night, but joy cometh in the morning. The eastern sky grows rosy with dawn, soon shall the sun be above the horizon and our land shall be flooded with his rays."

CHAPTER IV

PARLIAMENT ON THE COMMISSION

"LET Indians dismiss from their minds any thought of inferiority. They will be approached as friends and as equals," said Mr. Baldwin.*

The Prime Minister knew that all was not well with India. The Viceroy's announcement had met with an uproar from the Indian Press and the Indian public. The atmosphere was unhappily marred with doubts, misunderstandings and misgivings. The exclusion of Indians from the Royal Commission was construed as a breach of faith and represented as such to the British Press. The announcement by the Secretary of State for India on 20th August, 1927, on which the Reforms were founded, was analysed and interpreted from several platforms. The Moderates had admitted that for "the welfare and advancement of the Indian peoples," the responsibility lay with the British Government and the Government of India, who "must be judges of the time and measure of each advance." This position had always been conceded by the Moderates who had accepted the Parliamentary announcement, but they missed a corresponding concession on the part of the Government of India and England, whom they accused of having broken the pledge according to which

"they must be guided by the co-operation received from those upon whom new opportunities of service will thus be conferred and by the extent to which

* *Hansard*, 25th November, 1927.

it is found that confidence can be reposed in their sense of responsibility."

Where, they asked, are the new opportunities? Where is the confidence in their sense of responsibility?

The Moderates felt they had a right to expect co-operation, which must, of course, be on equal terms. They had served the Government in the dark days of the non-co-operation movement loyally and enthusiastically. When the Congress boycotted the Legislature, they boycotted the Congress. When the Congress called for a boycott of the visit of the Prince of Wales, they supported the imprisonment of the agitators, Mahatma Gandhi not excluded. "I take the full share of my responsibility for the condemnation of Mr. Gandhi," said Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru with obvious pride when Sir Chimanlal Setalvad, a member of the Bombay Governor's Executive Council might have felt that he, too, had his legitimate share in that brave transaction. The Moderates supported the policy of repressing the non-co-operation movement resulting in the imprisonment of twenty-thousand Congressmen.* They did all this in the hope that the Government would not fling them off like used gloves when repression had succeeded and non-co-operation had been rooted out. Their rage and disappointment naturally knew no limit when they learned that not even one leading member of their school of thought was appointed to the Commission. They blew the bugle of boycott with that scorn begotten of wounded vanity and injured innocence. Imagine that the Hindu and Muslim leaders of the boycott movement should be men of the eminence of Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, Sir Chimanlal Setalvad, Mr. S. Sinha, Sir Ali Imam, all ex-members of the Government; Mr. Hassan Imam, ex-Judge of the Calcutta High Court; and last and in one sense the most important of all, Mr. Mohammed

* Indian Legislative Assembly Proceedings.

Ali Jinnah, the President of the All-India Muslim League, and leader of the Independent Party in the Legislative Assembly, a magnetic personality to whom was attracted the progressive Muslim in and outside the Legislature. Mr. Jinnah is the Zaghul Pasha of Indian politics—incorruptible but suave, unbending so far as principles are concerned, but unlike Zaghul Pasha, willing to owe allegiance to the British Parliament, a point of view which separated him from the Congress Party, and but for which he would easily have been one of the three idols of the market place, the other two being Mahatma Gandhi and Pundit Motilal Nehru. Mr. Jinnah, however, would prefer the rôle of an iconoclast to an idol.

The situation was frankly embarrassing. It required the intervention of the Prime Minister, whose real greatness lies in his character and persuasive powers of a high order. Mr. Baldwin tried to convince the Indian statesmen :

“ That there should have been any misunderstanding is particularly regrettable, because it has led to premature rejection of the proposals by distinguished statesmen in India who have worked and co-operated with the Government during some very difficult years since the reforms first came into force. We regard the scheme as the most effective means of satisfying the proper ambition of such men to take part in the settlement of the constitutional future of India, and I take this opportunity of assuring them that His Majesty's Government earnestly desire that their opinion and the opinion of every man of goodwill, Indian or British, who has anything to contribute to the very difficult problem of India's future, shall be accessible to the Commission and shall be given the fullest weight in their conclusions. The Debate has shown the extreme difficulty of the preliminary question of deciding how best the great problem

could be brought into focus for the decision of Parliament."

The Prime Minister laid stress on one part of the scheme on which he felt not very much had been said so far.

"When the Commission has reported, but before Parliament is committed in any way to its recommendation or to the Government view upon them, we contemplate that the main questions for settlement shall be referred to a Joint Committee of Parliament, and that the Indian Legislature shall have an opportunity, by means of delegation, of examining the proposals and of discussing them thoroughly with this Joint Committee."

The Secretary of State for India, in a speech in another place, said :

"The Indian people will in this way be given an opportunity of taking part in the framing of their Constitution which has never been given in the whole of history to any people in a similar position.

"This, in itself, completely refutes the suggestion that the scheme belittles the right and the capacity of Indian statesmen to contribute to the solution of the great question at issue. The Commission has been chosen as to part of it from members who share in our daily work. On this point I do not think that I can do better than read to the House the brief statement made by my Right Honourable and learned friend who is going to be the Chair of this body, a statement which has already appeared in the Press, but which, I think, is worth reading to the House of Commons. In a letter to his constituents, he said : 'The British Parliament has a tremendous responsibility to the peoples of India. It is a responsibility which cannot be denied or evaded, for it is rooted in history and in the facts

of the world to-day. If, therefore, the future of India is to be one of peaceful progress, as all men of goodwill, both in India and in Britain, intensely desire, this can come about only by the action of the British Parliament combined with the co-operation of India itself. Both these are provided for by the scheme of investigation and consultation, of which the work of the Commission is the first stage. The Commission does not go to India with any idea of imposing Western ideas or constitutional forms from without, we go to listen, to learn, and faithfully to report our conclusions as to actual conditions and varying proposals from within. When the Commission has reported, the scheme provides for that full and final consultation between representatives of the Legislatures of India and Britain which is the essential condition which should be fulfilled before reaching the decision on which so much depends.

“The task of the Commission calls for the highest qualities of sympathy and imagination, as well as for endless patience, strict impartiality, industry and courage. I enter upon my part in this duty intensely desiring to be of what service I can to India and to Britain, and, while I am deeply conscious of my own shortcomings, I am going to do my best.”

“It is indeed an unprecedented path that we are walking upon,” the Prime Minister said, “No similar path has ever been explored by any Government or any body of men before. I rely, as I am sure all of us do in all parts of the House, for success to be achieved, on that instinctive sense of justice which is planted deep in the hearts of every Briton. The Leader of the Opposition spoke quite truly of the way in which we do our work on Parliamentary Committees when we are removed from the immediate controversial arena. The

Englishman, the Briton, owing to his training, his character, his history has one gift—and I do not always praise ourselves—he has that rare gift that when he finds himself acting in a judicial capacity he can bring an unbiased mind to the discharge of his duties, and dissociate himself from all the external paraphernalia of controversy, in which we take so much delight on the floor of this Chamber. I have faith that this Commission chosen from typical members among ourselves will discharge its duties with that high courage and sense of responsibility which we look for when our countrymen are showing what they are capable of. It was Milton who said many years ago in very strenuous days: ‘When God wants a hard thing done, he tells it to his Englishmen.’ No harder thing has ever been told to Englishmen than has been told to us in this matter. But we shall do it with courage, with faith, with strength, and with hope.”

It was a sincere utterance. In the Dominions Gallery of the House of Commons, the writer could hear the ring of sincerity in the great Prime Minister’s voice. It was a grand speech, worthy of the man who delivered it, the occasion on which it was delivered and the object with which it was delivered. India had to be conciliated. The Indian statesmen had to be weaned from the disastrous course of boycott to which they had in a hypercritical mood committed themselves. The aim of immediate conciliation was unhappily defeated by the inevitable speech of a previous day.* Mr. Baldwin’s soft words, contended the Bengalee Nationalist, cannot liquefy Lord Birkenhead’s hard facts!

Lord Birkenhead’s speech was really meant not for India so much as for the Socialist Opposition at home.

* Lord Birkenhead’s speech in the House of Lords, 24th November 1927.

His reference to the millions of depressed classes, the unfortunate slum-dwellers and untouchables, were all meant to melt the heart of the Socialist Opposition who were creating trouble in the House of Commons about India. The Socialists lack experience of administration. They have no sense of Imperialism. They wave the red flag in the House of Commons, even in an Indian debate, with awful consequences in India. These babes in politics have to be rocked in the cradle of Conservative statesmanship. True it was that in the brief régime of Mr. Ramsay Macdonald, they had out-Heroded Herod, chastised the Bengalees with whips and scorpions and encouraged Lord Reading himself to go against his cherished principles of Liberalism and his sense of justice, to use the Regulation III of 1818 and imprison some inconvenient Bengalees without trial. For long years they rotted in jails, and it was left to a Conservative Government to release very many, if not all of them. In India the Conservatives are any day more depended on than the Socialists. The former promise little but perform more. Envious of the reputation of the Conservatives, the Socialist back-benchers in the House of Commons have been throwing verbal bombs on the impatient Under-Secretary for India during the interpellation time, with a view to putting themselves right with public opinion. They were preparing for a veritable "rag" on the India day in the House of Commons when the Commission's personnel was to be adopted. Would they indulge in their usual bombastic talk of abolishing Imperialism and granting independence to India which would have a catastrophic effect in that "large dependency"? Lord Birkenhead had met privately three leaders of the Labour Party* who promised him all support. The Secretary of State had to strengthen

* Mr. Ramsay Macdonald, Mr. Snowden, and Mr. Lansbury waited in Deputation on the Secretary of State for India with a view to arrive at an agreed policy in regard to India.

their hands by telling those who had not read recent literature all about the conditions of the miserable labourers in India, the slums and the depressed classes. Remarkable, they say, is the power of oratory, but no orator could have realised his power of conquering opposition with greater satisfaction than Lord Birkenhead. His remarkable speech killed all opposition to the Commission in the House of Commons. His oratory appeared to have affected the emotional Socialists, who were in visible agony for the depressed classes ! The Socialist grumblers—all but one, as we shall presently see—were converted. The hands were strengthened of Mr. Ramsay Macdonald, who had acquired qualities of statesmanship, outgrown the Bohemian irresponsibility which he had displayed in the pages of his vast writings on India in more books than one, where he had denounced “Imperialism” which was “imperious,”* and had even urged that the burden of the British garrison in India should fall on the British exchequer as it was kept there for Imperial purposes.†

Lord Birkenhead said :

“Do not let us ever forget that the population of India—I suppose a general figure will be sufficient for my purpose—is somewhere in the neighbourhood of 300,000,000 people. Of those 300,000,000 some 70,000,000 belong to the Native States and are not primarily concerned with our present inquiry. I should suppose that of the 230,000,000 who remain about 220,000,000 have never heard of the Commission at all, and I do not believe it to be a bold prediction to say that about 200,000,000 are unaware that they are living under the benefits of the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms. One must retain some contact with reality when dealing with Indian

* *Awakening of India.* By Ramsay Macdonald.

† *Government of India.* By Ramsay Macdonald.

population. Remember how infinitely small is the number of those who vote when an election comes and, of that fractional percentage who vote, how large a proportion consists of the illiterate class, who mark their papers because they are unable to write. We in this House, and those in another place, have the responsibility not for a loudly articulate India but for the real India as a whole—that India which consists, as I have said, of 300,000,000 people.

“ . . . The case of the depressed classes. There is in India a vast population, even in relation to the numbers with which we are dealing, a population of 60,000,000 people in India, of the depressed classes. Their condition is not quite as terrible, not quite as poignant, as it has been in the past, but it is still terrible and poignant. They are repelled from all social intercourse. If they come between the gracious light of the sun and one who despises them, the sun is disfigured for that man, for they cannot drink at the public water supply, they must make diversions of miles in order to satisfy their thirst, and they are tragically known for generations as the ‘untouchable.’ There are 60,000,000 of them in India. Am I to have a representative of them upon this Commission? Never, never would I form a Commission, nor would anyone in a democratic country, nor would my friends opposite recommend it, from which you excluded a member of this class which, more than any other, requires representation, if you are indeed to put the matter to a mixed jury of the kind which I am indicating. I have not dealt with others, the aborigines and the inhabitants of backwood tracks, or the special representatives of the cotton trade, all of whom have been strong enough to assert their claim to individual representation upon Provincial Assemblies. My proposition is of a more general kind. It would be

impossible to form a Commission other than a Parliamentary Commission, which would not excite reasonable complaints of exclusion on the part of the persons who have very strong claims to be included. And what would the help be to Parliament? It is, I suppose, conceded that if I had representatives of the classes whom I have indicated I could not possibly exclude the Indian Civil Service. After all, the Indian Civil Service has deeply-rooted interests in India. It has rendered prodigious service over the ages. Mr. Lloyd George once said that they are the steel framework around which the whole building has been constructed. It is not, I imagine, suggested that, if you were to admit other than Parliamentary representatives, you could exclude members of the Indian Civil Service."

This speech of Lord Birkenhead was one of those "rapturous" speeches, as George Wyndham once called them, which, as another admirer would put it, might suit "the compilation of an anthology for the elocution classes of academies for young ladies and gentlemen."* It did not, however, please the Indian Moderates. It served the purpose admirably of the truculent Extremists, who exhorted the *intelligentsia* not to deprive the depressed classes, the untouchables and unapproachables of "the exclusive privilege of approaching and touching the angelic feet of God's seven Englishmen."

Lord Birkenhead's speech, his Indian critics felt, could have been delivered with greater effect and more justification to exclude India from the benefit of further reforms. "If conditions were so desperate in India, why send out a Commission at all; why not withdraw the existing reforms?" asked the Congressmen. Others said if Lord Birkenhead wanted the consent of Parliament to postpone the appointment of the

* Lord Birkenhead. By Ephesian.

Indian Reforms Enquiry Commission for another century, he could not have made a more convincing and appropriate speech.

Observations similar to those of Lord Birkenhead have been made in recent times by well-known friends of the "teeming and toiling millions," like Sir Michael O'Dwyer, who have persistently and consistently opposed the Reforms.

"The charge has often been made,"* wrote Sir Michael O'Dwyer in 1925, "that the Punjab Government in my time was opposed to the principle of the Reforms. . . . I did expose and oppose the design of a small and unrepresentative section to get control of the administration . . . like nearly all others on whom the burden of administration rested, I was critical of an experiment evolved in the brains of theorists which had never been tried in any other country. We held that India was the last place for the trial of such fantastic innovations, and that the vast masses of the people, who admittedly had no political aspirations and for generations to come were unlikely to be moved but by racial, sectarian or caste considerations, would be unable to benefit by so-called 'political concessions' which were hybrid exotics and had in them nothing indigenous or intelligible to the average Indian mind. The only answer of the authors of the scheme to this criticism was that it was desirable in their own interests to disturb the placid pathetic contentment of the masses."

But if the present policy of drift continues "the Steel-frame" will soon have ceased to exist.

Sentiments similar to those contained in Lord Birkenhead's speech may be quoted from the speech delivered by Lord Dufferin nearly forty years ago.

* *India as I knew it*, page 369. By Sir Michael O'Dwyer.

Moderate Indians, however, thought that such views would no longer be aired, unless the purpose was to withdraw the reforms. Mr. Montagu and Lord Chelmsford themselves discussed the views which Lord Birkenhead holds when they wrote as follows in their report *:

“ In estimating the politically-minded portion of the people of India we should not go either to census reports on the one hand or to political literature on the other. It is one of the most difficult portions of our task to see them in their right relation to the rest of the country. Our obligations to them are plain, for they are intellectually our children. They have imbibed ideas which we ourselves have set before them and we ought to reckon it to their credit. The present intellectual and moral stir in India is no reproach but rather a tribute to our work. The *Raj* would have been a mechanical and iron thing if the spirit of India had not responded to it. We must remember, too, that the educated Indian has come to the front by hard work ; he has seized the education which we offered him because he first saw its advantages ; and it is he who has advocated and worked for political progress. All this stands to his credit. For thirty years he has developed in his Congress, and latterly in the Muslim League, free popular convocations which express his ideals. We owe him sympathy because he has conceived and pursued the idea of managing his own affairs, an aim which no Englishman can fail to respect. He has made a skilful, and on the whole, a moderate, use of the opportunities which we have given him in the legislative councils of influencing Government and affecting the course of public business, and of recent years, has, by speeches

* Montagu-Chelmsford Report on Indian Reforms, paras. 139 and 140.

and in the Press, done much to spread the idea of a united and self-respecting India among thousands who had no such conception in their minds. Helped by the inability of the other classes in India to play a prominent part, he has assumed the place of leader, but his authority is by no means universally acknowledged and may in an emergency prove weak.

"The prospects of advance very greatly depend upon how far the educated Indian is in sympathy with and capable of fairly representing the illiterate masses. The old assumption that the interests of the *ryot* must be confided to official hands is strenuously denied by modern, educated Indians. They claim that the European official must by his lack of imagination and comparative lack of skill in tongues be gravely handicapped in interpreting the thoughts and desires of an Asiatic people. On the other hand it is argued that in the limited spread of education, the endurance of caste exclusiveness and of usages sanctioned by caste, and in the records of some local bodies and councils, may be found reasons which suggest that the politically-minded classes stand somewhat apart from and in advance of the ordinary life of the country. Nor would it be surprising if this were the case. Our educational policy in the past aimed at satisfying the few, who sought after English education, without sufficient thought of the consequences which might ensue from not taking care to extend instruction to the many. We have in fact created a limited *intelligentsia* who desire advance, and we cannot stay their progress entirely until education has been extended to the masses. It has been made a reproach to the educated classes that they have followed too exclusively after one or two pursuits, the law, journalism or schoolteaching; and that these are all callings which make men inclined to overrate the importance of words and phrases. But even if there is substance

in the count, we must take a note also how far the past policy of Government is responsible. We have not succeeded in making education practical. It is only now, when the war has revealed the importance of industry, that we have deliberately set about encouraging Indians to undertake the creation of wealth by industrial enterprise, and have thereby offered the educated classes any tangible inducement to overcome their traditional inclination to look down on political forms of energy. We must admit that the educated Indian is a creation peculiarly of our own; and if we take the credit that is due to us for his strong points we must admit a similar liability for his weak ones. Let us note also in justice to him that the progressive Indian appears to realise the narrow basis of his position and is beginning to broaden it. In municipal and university work he has taken a useful and creditable share. We find him organising effort not for political ends alone, but for various forms of public and social service. He has come forward and done work in relieving famine and distress by floods, in keeping order at fairs, in helping pilgrims, and in promoting co-operative credit. Although his ventures in the fields of commerce have not been always fortunate, he is beginning to turn his attention more to the improvement of agriculture and industry. Above all he is active in promoting education and sanitation; and every increase in the number of educated people adds to his influence and authority."

If Whitehall had exercised a similar charity of judgment, they would have approached the Indian question differently; instead of finding brilliant arguments for the exclusion of Indians, they would have "rallied the Moderates," in Lord Morley's phrase. Having followed a different course, it is natural that arguments should be brought forward to justify it.

The speech of the Secretary of State reminded his predecessor in office, Lord Olivier, of a topical illustration in the current number of *Punch*. There the Secretary of State, depicted as a snake-charmer charming the Indian serpent or Sir John Simon, is presented as a doctor going to the Indian patient and saying :

“ I want to prescribe,” and the patient is saying :
“ Let me prescribe for myself.” “ No,” the doctor says, “ I will prescribe for you and if you will keep quiet in bed and take the medicines I prescribe for you, you shall be allowed next week to have a walk in the garden.”

That is the attitude in which a great many of my fellow-countrymen regard this Indian question. The noble Earl knows that that attitude is an unfortunate one where Indians are concerned. The reasonable and intelligent men with whom he has conversed, and with whom the members of this able Commission will converse, will disabuse the minds of them and anyone else who enters into discussion with them of any such idea. Although it may be said that 200,000,000 of the Indian people know nothing about the question of the appointment of the Commission yet there can be no question that the Indian Reform Party on the whole does represent the views and wishes and the political will of the Indian people so far as it can be represented. They desire self-government and self-control for India. It is the purpose of this Commission to assist them to endeavour to bring that about. But this Commission is commonly regarded in India, and Indians have been made to regard it, as though it was a sort of examination paper set to them. We regret that the Government, before making their original proposals in connection with the Indian Commission, did not secure the co-operation of the representatives of the Indian people. In our opinion the Commission appointed to proceed to India should make it its primary duty from time to

time to consult, *on equal terms, with a Commission appointed by the Indian Legislature* ; that there should be joint meetings of the two Commissions for the taking of the evidence (though not the exclusion of either body taking other evidence by itself); that after all the evidence has been heard and the inquiries made, further consultations between the two Commissions should be held ; and that the reports of both Commissions should in due course be presented to the Joint Committee of the two Houses of Parliament. The Labour Party has every confidence that its representatives on the Commission will act in the spirit of this declaration. (The italics are mine.)

Lord Olivier gave his support in the House of Lords to the Government Commission and his party in the House of Commons did the same. Educated India and especially the friends of Labour were grossly disappointed. Labour had raised hopes in the Indian mind by their resolutions and speeches in their Conferences. At their Annual Conference at Liverpool, in 1925, "the right of the Indian peoples to full self-government and self-determination" was recognised. The Conference welcomed the declarations of representative Indian leaders in favour of "free and equal partnership with the other members of the British Commonwealth of Nations" and urged that the British Government should adopt a policy of co-operation with the Indian people. Was exclusion of Indians from the Royal Commission, which was unprecedented by the history and unwarranted by the traditions relating to Royal Commissions in India, the form of co-operation that Labour suggested ? As it was obviously not so, some Labour publicists expressed the opinion in their papers that Labour men should not serve on the Conservative Commission.

While Labour in England was divided in its attitude towards the Commission, India was getting united in its

hostility towards her Labour friends in England. "What has happened to all their tall talk in their conferences?" asked the Congressmen. "Scratch a Labourite and you find an Imperialist." India made the mistake of taking the irresponsible resolutions passed in party conferences to impress the gullible delegates as the real or immediate programme of the Parliamentary party. At their Annual Conference at Blackpool, in 1927, the Labour Party had unanimously passed the following resolution :

"The Conference re-affirms the right of the Indian peoples to full self-government and self-determination, and therefore is of opinion that the policy of the British Government should be one of continuous co-operation with the Indian people, with the object of establishing India, at the earliest possible moment, and by her consent, as an equal partner with the other members of the British Commonwealth of Nations.

"The Conference declares that the Royal Commission to be appointed under the Government of India Act should be so constituted, and its method of doing its work so arranged, that it will enjoy the confidence and co-operation of the Indian people.

"The Conference re-affirms its declaration that, with a view to a new atmosphere for friendly discussion of the constitutional status of India, all coercive measures and repressive legislation should be withdrawn; it recognises that some steps have already been taken in the release of political prisoners, especially in Bengal, and that the results have admittedly justified action; the Conference, however, urges the Government to use its authority in favour of the immediate release or trial of all those persons now in prison, or detained without trial, who were convicted by Martial Law or Special Tribunals."

Mr. Ramsay Macdonald, who had to face critics in his own camp, explained that there was nothing that conflicted with the principle of self-determination in the appointment of a purely British Commission, because India was offered an opportunity to determine her own constitution through the Joint Committees of the Central Legislature. He said :*

“ There is one thing I should like to say in this respect. If there is any thing that representative democracy holds in high esteem it is the Parliament of its representatives. Parliaments are not exclusive bodies. They may have been, but those of us who believe in an organised public opinion created for the purpose of making that opinion effective in administration and legislation, must, of necessity, hold Parliament as the highest expression of that public opinion in any country. When we support, as I do and my colleagues and party, the suggestion that the Parliament of this country, as representatives and custodian of the people of this country in all political and constitutional matters, should say to the Parliament of India, we are going to regard you as the representative of Indian opinion; we are going to recognise you, having an authority like to our own, having a function and position like to our own in your country, and when we want to know what is going to be the constitution of India in the future, when we want to know what the opinion of the political India is, even imagining India to be a political unity, when we turn to the Indian Parliament we say to it : ‘ We appoint a Commission, you appoint a similar body, and the two Commissions working together in harmonious co-operation with each other are going to report to the House of Commons, what the line of the new constitution is to be,

* *Hansard*, 25th November, 1927.

what the principles of the new constitution should be,' then I say that, instead of insulting public opinion in India, instead of belittling the political intelligence of India, we are doing it the greatest homage that one Parliament can do to another, or one nation can ever do to another, with which it is in political relationship."

But Mr. Macdonald could not deny the position of the British Parliament which the Under-Secretary of State for India had with remarkable frankness emphasised, partly for the benefit of India and partly for those at home who had been gulled by the Socialists' big talk about self-determination and such-like things :

" Upon Parliament lies the responsibility and the ultimate decision upon the issues to be raised by this inquiry, a responsibility which it can neither share with nor hand over to any other authority.

" Attempts have been made to draw a comparison between the conditions prevailing in India and the conditions prevailing, for example, in Ireland or Egypt. I believe anyone with any knowledge of those three countries will say such a comparison would be profoundly fallacious. Both Egypt and South Ireland are far more homogeneous than the great sub-Continent of India has ever been. Let me give only two examples of that. If you examine the situation in Egypt you will not find that the felaheen of Egypt, the ordinary peasant of that country, had the cringing awe in the presence of others of his own country that the depressed classes in India, for example, have in the presence of a Brahmin or high-caste Hindu. Theoretically, at any rate, in a country like Egypt, where the predominant religion is that of Islam, everyone is equal before the religious law. Again, take the case of Southern Ireland. I do not think that there has ever been in the history of Southern Ireland, such bitterness

between Catholics and Protestants as is to be found between Hindus and Mohammedans in many parts of Southern India."

These words clearly brought out the difference between the spirit of the Blackpool resolution and the present policy which Labour endorsed.

"Although nobody could resist the constitutional and historical survey of the position of the Indian Parliament which was made by the Under Secretary," said Mr. Ramsay Macdonald, "the less that aspect is emphasised the better."

When the British Parliament is the supreme and final judge, how then, asked the Congressmen in India, could Labour's enthusiasm for the principle of self-determination be consistent with their zeal for the Commission?

The Indian Moderates and Nationalists had their exponent in the House of Commons. Colonel Wedgwood, who justified their attitude of boycott, said:

"I am anxious, to-day, to impress upon this House that it would be better that this Commission should not go out to India. We are obviously, by the sending out of this Commission, digging a gulf between the peoples of Great Britain and the peoples of India, a gulf in which hope and faith lie buried, where a modern Curtius might say: 'Gladly would I leap into the gulf.' But it cannot be closed in that way. The gulf that is developing can only be closed by increasing understanding and sympathy between the two great races forming the British Empire. At the present time, people in this country are feeling that the Indians are irrational and childish, and those who have read *Mother India* probably possess even stronger feelings, and the people in India in the same way are thinking of us as faithless, false and hypocritical. . . . We cannot now, in

this House, alter in any degree the boycott of this Commission that is going to take place in India. Nothing said to-day will change the opinion of people in India who have already stated their opinion. . . . They have been throughout all these years since the Government of India Act was passed expecting this Commission. It has been the one beam of light they have had in politics and they have built up altogether fantastic hopes of what that Commission, when it is appointed, can do. Whenever they conceived the Commission they thought of it as something which would be definitive and on which Indian leaders and English leaders would co-operate in constructing a definite scheme of reform, a definite next step forward. When the Labour Party were in office we discussed whether, by taking ex-Secretaries of State of India and ex-Viceroy of all parties, we could form a committee which, in conjunction with Indian leaders would be in the position to 'deliver the goods.' It did not take place for various reasons, but it has been that sort of committee that the Indians have ever had in their minds.

"You must remember that these people are far more alive to certain parts of British history than we are. They remember perfectly well a certain meeting in Downing Street with Michael Collins and the Irish leaders and Lord Birkenhead, and other British leaders, a round-table conference which established peace, and, though not very reputable from our point of view, seeing it was a surrender to force, at any rate it did start another Dominion in the Empire on self-governing lines. They see, therefore, that all their hopes of a settlement in which they are the consenting party come to an end, and, instead, they have this Commission. . . ."

Colonel Wedgwood has been in India. He has

attended the meetings of the Indian National Congress and spoken from its platform. He has always opposed the non-co-operation movement of Mahatma Gandhi, especially that part which related to the boycott of the Councils. While, in India, in his interviews to the newspaper man, who used to swarm round him wherever he went, in his speeches and in his private conversations he earnestly pleaded with the Congressmen to give up their attitude of non-co-operation. He had to face the attack of a certain section of the Extremist Press, who asked "who was this arrogant foreigner to come and tell us what to do. He might as well go and teach his grandmother to suck eggs." The very extreme section apart, Colonel Wedgwood was listened to with respect and he exercised much moderating influence in India. His speech in the House of Commons was of a man who knew India, who had tried to exercise a restraining influence on India during his brief visit, who had worked for India in the House of Commons and whose principal mission has been to construct an enduring bridge over the gulf that yawns between Britain and India.

The voice of the Indian Extremists was also heard in the Commons, when the only communist member spoke, but by bringing in Russia, which is obviously on his brain, this over-wrought gentleman spoiled his case. He also made the position of the Congressmen who have not recognised the authority of British Parliament ridiculous by moving an amendment, that the House should

"invite Pundit Motilal Nehru of the Legislative Assembly of India, to the Bar of the House to explain Indian sentiments and to guide the House, as provided for in the Preamble of the Government of India Act, 1919, before concurring in the submission to His Majesty of the names of persons,"

a preamble, by the way, which the Pundit and his party

have trampled underfoot ! The fantastic amendment was rightly rejected with contempt by the House of Commons without a division, its only two supporters being the mover and the seconder.

Pundit Motilal Nehru, who was sitting next to me in the Dominions Gallery, wondered what the Congress would think of it. He did not like the idea of his own fellow-countryman in the Commons calling on the leader of a subject people as a convict in chains appealing for *locus poenitentiae* before the Jury of the House of Commons.

Be that as it may, with the Blessings of the Mother of Parliaments, the Royal Commission started on their arduous journey "with a heart for any fate."

CHAPTER V

THE BOYCOTT

THE immediate effect in India of the discussion in Parliament and the decision of all parties to treat India as an Imperial and a non-party matter resulted in the closing of the ranks. There were differences of opinion among the parties about the plan of campaign. But it was agreed that those whom the Commission united should not underline the differences but emphasise the point of unity.

When Sir John and his comrades were on the high seas, the Liberals were vigorously preaching "boycott," and the Congressmen were preparing for a peaceful All-India "hartal" (voluntary suspension of business). Hartal in the present temper of India requires no preparation. But a peaceful "hartal" requires long and careful organisation.

The Congress stood alone among the political organisations for "hartal." It had given a mandate to its branches throughout the country to enforce non-violence. No force was to be used but only peaceful persuasion. Those who believed in the Simon Commission must be permitted to keep their shops open. Those who believed in non-co-operation and the sacrifice of the earnings of a day by joining hands with the Congress would suspend their business. "Hartal" in the past having led to violence and riots, extra precaution was taken by the Congress workers whose number had considerably dwindled and consequently whose responsibility correspondingly increased, since the days of the non-co-operation movement.

The "hartal" was confined only to business men; not to the numerous workmen such as the mill-hands, nor to those who work in the railway, post and telegraph and other such departments. The Congressman did not want to wade beyond his depth, because this was the first "hartal" after the suspension of the non-co-operation movement six years ago.

The Congress organisations throughout the country tried to enforce the "hartal" in accordance with the mandate which was issued by the session of Madras, which had made itself a megaphone of political extremism and idealism, and declared "independence" outside the pale of the Empire, so the loud speakers proclaimed, as the only fitting reply to Lord Birkenhead. It was in an atmosphere of much excitement and stormy opposition from the considerable section of the educated people that the Commission landed in Bombay.

The day was a Friday, 3rd February. The weather was unexpectedly unkind. The Simon Commission landed amidst ominous portents of thunder, lightning and rain, so very unusual for Bombay at that time of the year.

A boycott procession, consisting of students and trained volunteers, under competent leadership proceeded peacefully to ask the Commission to "go back"! A huge crowd was specially avoided, in the light of previous experience. Bombay still remembered its unfortunate and ill-conducted boycott of the Prince of Wales, which resulted in bloodshed and loss of lives.

Surprise was in store for the procession. When it reached the harbour, it was disappointed to find itself locked out of the outer gates. Those who came to demonstrate had to make the best of a bad situation. They presently formed themselves into little groups outside the gate and trusted to their lungs and flags to cover the distance between themselves and the gentle

enquirers from the West. "Simon, go back!" they shouted, to be followed by a bigger shout of "Bande-mataram."* Black-lettered banners were flourished containing the inscriptions: "No Representation, no Commission," "Swaraj is our birthright," "Down with British Imperialism," "We would touch the untouchables, not the Simonites," "Unwelcome, unwanted." Each motto represented a distinct group, all of which stood united in the boycott. The first represented the Moderates who have worked the Reforms and been strictly loyal to the British, but who would have nothing to do with the Commission, because they were not represented in it. The second represented the followers of Tilak, a large body in Bombay, who gave them the *mahamantra*†; "Swaraj is our birthright and we will take it." The third represented the anti-Imperialist League. The fourth voiced the feelings of those social reformers who were devoted to the amelioration of the condition of the depressed classes. The fifth motto was a comprehensive one, which brought all the parties under one umbrella, as it were, on a rainy day.

Except for an alleged fracas of an exceedingly mild form with the police, everything passed off peacefully. The police arrangements were perfect. The Commissioner of Police and Deputy Commissioner of Police were on the scene about 6 a.m. and supervised the arrangements. The Chief Presidency Magistrate was also present for emergency. Armed police guards were posted near the entrance to the harbour station and as each car proceeded inside its occupants were questioned about their business, etc.

Meantime the representatives of the Press had rushed on board. The evening papers and special

* Once the war-cry of the Bengalee Nationalists which has now become a National war-song and means "I bow to thee, O Motherland!" or "Hail, Motherland!"

† Sacred verse.

lunch editions wanted "copy." But they did not know Sir John Simon from Adam! They were dodged from the purser down to the cabin steward. Finally with the help of a photograph they recognised "a tall, aristocratic-looking gentleman," as one of them put it, talking to a charming lady. Would it be rude to interrupt Colonel Lane Fox? But necessity knows no etiquette. The Colonel politely referred them to the Secretary of the Commission! They walked into the cabin of Mr. Vernon Hartshorn. He would not encourage them either. Are you aware of the storm that is brewing outside, put in a disappointed Pressman? "Yes," said the Welsh Socialist, "but it will be followed by the proverbial calm. All this misunderstanding will soon disappear." But, said the young man of the Press, how do you reconcile your presence here with your Blackpool resolution, which, by the way, was reprinted under flaring headlines in the Nationalist press. "There is nothing inconsistent," returned the Labour Member, who passed these uncomfortable men on to Major Atlee. The good Major stood for the Blackpool resolution as well as the Commission. "How can you have it both ways?" enquired a representative of the Nationalist Press. "It would take a long time to discuss that," and he was expected for breakfast in the Government House! "But what do they mean by appointing war-lords on the Commission," persisted the interviewer. The Major was surprised. "Who are the war-lords?" he said. "Yourself," returned the cheeky young man, apologising presently. "I mean no offence." The apology was drowned in the Socialist's laughter. "There is misunderstanding on both sides, but it will all vanish, Good-bye."

They went to Lord Burnham, who sympathised with the adventure of the gentlemen of the Fourth Estate. He put them at their ease. His Lordship became very communicative on matters of perennial

importance, and not, of course, on the one matter of topical interest. Lord Burnham told them briefly about newspaper business and journalism both in India and England. He wished to see a Press Conference held in India. Similar conferences had been held in England and elsewhere and for the first time there was an international gathering of the Press at Geneva. Asked if the sale of the *Daily Telegraph* meant his giving up journalism, he replied in the negative, and added that he would continue his work, but not in the same way as he did before. When referred to the recent amalgamation of the *Westminster Gazette* and *The Daily News*, Lord Burnham said that it was inevitable. Big combines were becoming the order of the day. Personally he would prefer individualism in newspapers, although it was not always possible. The economic advantage of large scale production was obvious as it reduced the cost of production. In that direction big combines would seem to work more advantageously. When Lord Burnham was told that Bombay was contemplating the burning of the effigies of the members of the Commission, he was rather unhappy, but hoped when the intentions of the Commission were made public, the smoke of misunderstanding would disappear.

The reporters would not leave the boat before having had a talk with Sir John Simon, who had to make a short statement to the irrepressible imps :

“Constitutional progress in British India essentially depends on the friendly and sincere co-operation of Indian and British representatives, but it is manifest that there exists at the moment in some quarters widespread misunderstanding of what the Commission sets out to do and uncertainty as to the methods it proposes to employ. We shall make it our business without delay to remove these misapprehensions and after we reach Delhi and have

become better acquainted with the actual situation we intend to make a statement as to our proposed procedure which should leave no ground for the suspicions which have unfortunately arisen. We mean to take the fullest advantage of the opportunities open to us for consultation with Indian representatives who are willing to meet us, both during this preliminary visit and when we return for a longer tour in October."

After, the landing party drove off to the Government House. The crowd outside shouted "Bandemataram" as Sir John's car passed and he doffed his hat, thereby showing the demonstrators that he understood the uncorrupted meaning of that phrase, which was only a salute to the Motherland, "Bandemataram" being a substitute for "good-morning" and "good-night" among the Bengalees and the young Nationalists all over the country. This little incident made even some of the scoffers exclaim, "You are an English gentleman. We have nothing against you personally."

Sir John had obviously gone to conquer. There was no hostile demonstration on the railway platform when the Commission left for Delhi, and therefore those who wanted to welcome the Commissioners could do so without interruption. Three groups purporting to represent the Non-Brahmin community, the Depressed Classes and the Untouchables, and the Muslims met the Commission, represented their grievances and garlanded the members. A deputation even touched the feet of Sir John Simon and exclaimed: "You are our deliverers and we look up to you to save us."

To all the complaints made to him, Sir John Simon made a suitable and non-committal reply, assuring the deputationists that he would hear and help them and everybody else who presented their cases before the Commission.

Sir John Simon enquired as regards Non-Brahmins and Depressed Classes whether they had elective representation in the local Legislature, and was informed that they had no elective representation but only nomination.

Sir John: Have the Depressed Classes a constituency of their own?

A.: No. The Government is looking after their interests by nominating representatives on the Councils. We would very much like that special facilities should be given to them and their education and economic interests safeguarded. Even in the Councils, we have been fighting for educational facilities, but the advanced classes have been against us.

Sir John: We come here to find out all these things and take evidence.

"It is a terrible problem, is it not?" Sir John was reported to have finally said about the Depressed Classes. The Deputationists gave three cheers to the Commission and the train steamed out to the shouts, "God bless Sir John Simon!" "Allah-O-Akbar!"* which had not died away until the train had long passed by.

When the Depressed Classes, Non-Brahmins, loyal Muslims and Untouchables were giving a hearty reception to the Simon Commission, over fifty thousand people, educated men, Hindu, Muslims and Parsees, had assembled on the beach in an unprecedentedly large public meeting under the presidency of Sir Chimmanlal Setalvad. It demonstrated the enthusiasm of the classes and the masses and the unity of parties which were hitherto divided on the issue of co-operation or non-co-operation. In opening the proceedings, Sir Chimmanlal Setalvad said that he was very glad indeed to preside at a meeting of that character of the citizens of Bombay. In all his public

* "God is Great."

life, Sir Chimmanlal observed, he had never witnessed a gathering of such magnitude, consisting of all classes and creeds and of all shades of public opinion. This was an occasion which had brought together people of different political thoughts, people of different creeds and races altogether.

Proceeding, Sir Chimmanlal said :

“ You know of the appointment of the Simon Commission (shame, shame) to investigate the reforms that are now in force and make recommendations with regard to them to Parliament. From this Commission, as you are aware, all Indians have been excluded (shame, shame). In this land of three hundred millions, with our ancient civilisation and with the intelligence that we possess, not a single Indian has been considered fit to sit on this Commission (shame, shame). It is very singular that in a nation and in a country as big as India, whose political future is to be settled by a Commission, it is to be done by a Commission consisting purely of Englishmen, without a single Indian in it to voice the wants and wishes of this country. It passes my imagination, how seven Englishmen, however able and intelligent they may be—and I do not deny that at least the chairman is able and intelligent—without any conception of this country, without any acquaintance of the manners and customs of our people and without any ideas of the sentiments of the people, can determine our future, unless they had with them a few Indian colleagues to help them in the matter.”

Proceeding, Sir Chimmanlal said that since the appointment of the Commission nothing had happened which could make them alter the view they took up even from the beginning. It had been said in support of the personnel of the Commission that although

Indians had been excluded from it, certain arrangements had been made by which the Committees of the Legislatures would have a potent voice in the recommendations of this Commission. But those arrangements, Sir Chimmanlal declared, did not and could not secure to the Committees equal rights and equal participation in the proceedings of the Commission as India rightfully claimed in this enquiry.

Amidst loud and continued cheers, the Bombay knight, who was until the other day a pet of the Government and anathema to the Nationalists, wound up his speech in the following words :

“ Unless the British Government are prepared to retrieve their mistake and retrace their steps, we are all of one mind that the Commission, as constituted at present, is wholly unacceptable to us, and I have no doubt that the whole country is with us in this matter, and we shall have nothing to do with the Commission at any stage or in any form.”

The following resolution, which was later on endorsed by the Assembly, was unanimously passed :

“ Meeting of the citizens of Bombay declare that the Statutory Commission as announced is unacceptable to the country and calls upon the people of India to have nothing to do with it at any stage or in any form.”

The Hon. Sir P. Sethna, who had hitherto been a consistent supporter of the Government, spoke on that resolution indignantly as follows :

Government were aware that we had resolved to boycott the Commission because of the exclusion of Indians from its personnel. The Viceroy in his announcement of 8th November, 1927, and later on Lord Birkenhead, the Prime Minister (Mr.

Baldwin), and others, have all tried to explain that no insult or indignity was intended. Addressing the Central Legislature, his Excellency Lord Irwin said that we Indians were creating affronts in our imagination, where none in fact existed, and that it was untrue to say that his Majesty's Government sought to offer a deliberate affront to Indian honour and Indian pride. This was adding insult to injury. The standards of one's sense of honour and of one's pride ought to be alike everywhere, but evidently, according to the Viceroy, they must be different in the East and in the West. Assuming for argument's sake that the Secretary of State and the Viceroy honestly believed that they were not hurting India's feelings in any way, he asked his Excellency if any single one of the Indian leaders out of the fourteen men who were asked to interview him admitted that he did not regard the exclusion of Indians as an affront to Indian honour and Indian pride? Government never cared to consult any of these men before deciding to exclude Indians, as they should have done, or they would have known that they would strongly resent any such action. When, however, in the first week of November the Viceroy did learn from his interviews that one and all of them were greatly incensed and according to standards in the East they regarded the exclusion of Indians as an indignity and a humiliation, what steps did he or the Secretary of State take to remedy the mischief? On the contrary, they persisted in what they had done and tried to justify the same. They might well do so and India on her part must strengthen her resolve to leave the Commission severely alone. Government never seemed to be happy unless they rubbed the people the wrong way. They would not take the public with them, but must first antagonise them, be it in the matter of the appointment of the Statutory Commission or the Skeen Committee

report. Such was their mentality, but a mentality which, instead of narrowing, widened the gulf, which was unfortunate for both countries.

Maulana Shaukat Ali rose to support the resolution in very temperate language as compared to Sir Pheroze Sethna. The Maulana has been twice imprisoned and once interned. He is the right-hand man of Gandhi. Quite a contrast to his master who is a short little man, the Maulana is a big burly figure, who once told Colonel Wedgwood :

"Tell the British Government I am too fat to run away from the fight."

As regards the Simon Commission, the Maulana treated it as a joke. He said the Moderates and our students were good enough to fight it. The Extremists must aim at something more substantial, more permanent than an evanescent boycott. The Commission was not going to give them Swaraj.

"Swaraj is not given—it is taken. It is my earnest desire," he said to the vast audience in Bombay who cheered every sentence of this fire-eating Mussulman, "to see India free from the bondage of slavery."

There were other speakers, representing other classes. Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, the poet, spoke for her sex and warned "the men of India," that if they failed in their Dharma (duty) "the women of India would disown them."

Mr. B. G. Horniman, who represented that small group of Englishmen who stood by the Home Rule Movement, the two other prominent British fellow-subjects being Mrs. Besant and the Rev. Andrews, emphasised in his speech the tremendous significance of the evening's meeting,

"not for the benefit of those present but for the benefit of those who were not there."

The "hartal" in Bombay was described as follows by a pro-government News Agency :*

"Bombay wore a deserted appearance when the Simon Commission landed to-day.

"In Indian quarters business practically was at a standstill. All shops and offices, excepting eating houses and pansupari shops, were closed. No business was done in the share, bullion, cotton and piecegoods markets. All jewellery shops and bazaars were closed.

"All the cotton mill workers came out and went in a procession through northern parts of the town, led by Mr. Spratt and other labour leaders. A labour meeting was held at which effigies of Mr. Baldwin, Lord Birkenhead, Sir John Simon and Mr. Macdonald were burnt.

"No disturbances were reported from any quarter up to 5 p.m.

"A very largely attended meeting of students was held at Cowasjee Jehangir Hall, over which Mr. K. F. Nariman presided. The hall was packed to the full and speeches were delivered by the students and by Mrs Sarojini Naidu and the President.

"A procession was then formed, and marched through Hornby Road, waving black flags and carrying banners to Chaupathi, where a monster meeting was held.

"The meeting on Chaupathi Sands was attended by nearly 50,000. Besides the procession of students, other processions converged on the sands from various parts of the city, and swelled the gathering."

A similar "hartal" was observed in several parts of the country. In Calcutta, fifty Congress volunteers

* The Associated Press of India.

were arrested on a charge of obstructing and later on released. Armoured cars were sent for and police and military pickets were posted at intervals. All the shops in the Indian trading centre were closed and no business was transacted. The "hartal" affected the courts and colleges. A clash occurred between the students and police in the Presidency College at College Street. As a result of an assault on the Principal, the Police Commissioner, Sir Charles Tegart, arrived on the spot, and tried to persuade students to disperse. Brickbats were hurled from all directions, with the result that Sir Charles Tegart was slightly injured on the arm. Police at once telephoned for military aid, and two companies, namely A and C of the Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry, arrived on the scene, accompanied by four armoured cars. The police with fixed bayonets were patrolling the streets and barricaded a section of College Square and the junction of the Harrison Road and College Street.

After the day's "hartal" was over, four meetings were held in North and South Calcutta, and resolutions were passed condemning the appointment of the Statutory Commission. The organiser-in-chief of the "hartal" was Mr. S. Bose (who had resigned from the I.C.S., joined the Home Rule Movement and been interned for some years without trial). Addressing a meeting Mr. Bose said that the 3rd of February would be a memorable day in the history of India, because by the grace of God, the example set by British character would be imprinted in their hearts as long as there would be a single drop of blood in them. If the British had the right to live in their homes in freedom, Indians had an equal right to do so. The time had come when they would say :

" Oh, British Raj, we are not afraid of you. I believe we are not inferior to you in any way ; but rather superior in many respects."

Ten years ago, continued Mr. Bose, he never dreamt that such a state of things would come to pass. The present was an opportune moment and, by the grace of God, the situation had so turned that there was no way out for England but to make a settlement with them. The time had come to attain their birthright, and there was no power on earth to deprive them of it.

The red climax was reached in what used to be known as "the benighted presidency" of Madras. The "hartal" in Madras when the Commission landed in Bombay was marked by disorderly scenes. In Georgetown, the centre of the city, mob violence culminated in the burning of a motor car, the events following which were accompanied by police opening fire on the mob, killing one and wounding two others. Widespread panic prevailed all over the city. Military pickets were posted at important centres in different localities.

The police had anticipated trouble. The entire police force of the city had been mobilised the previous day and strong pickets headed by sub-inspectors and sergeants in some places and head constables in others were posted in all important junctions of roads, besides those who did the ordinary traffic duty. Mounted patrols could be noticed in some areas. The day dawned comparatively quiet, though everywhere there were signs of suspension of all kinds of business. Vegetable, meat and fish markets were closed and so were shops and bazaars of all grades in different parts of the city. The only life in evidence was the presence of people in groups of six and seven at street corners and the running of tramcars almost empty.

The trouble increased with the advance of the day. Tramcars came to a standstill and some were returning with clear marks of violence on them. They were all running empty with smashed glass panes. A few of the conductors were hit badly by stones. Con-

stables also were directed to give protection. By eleven o'clock the sheds were filling quickly with returning cars, of which about thirty had been roughly handled.

Even the few 'buses which plied early in the morning ceased later as a result of picketting. Taxis disappeared from their usual stands and private cars were few and far between, but some of them were running at a terrific speed obviously from fear of molestation on the way. A Ford car, in which an European was seated, and another in which some Indians were driven, collided and the car appeared to have been abandoned for a long time in front of the main gate to the Government House, with one of its front wheels badly damaged.

While comparative quiet prevailed in other parts of the City, the Esplanade area in Georgetown became the scene of much violence and commotion from morning till evening and on the news of stray incidents reaching other areas, the crowds kept on flowing into it until it was one seething mass of humanity.

At about this time at the Law College gate a number of students assisted by a fairly large crowd was picketting the college in order to prevent those who desired to attend. The crowd that was moving from Broadway joined with the one near the Law College. They then moved on towards the Law College Police Station. The police refusing to accede to the demand for the release of the arrested, the mob began to pelt them with stones. This created a lot of excitement.

Near the Law College two naval officers attached to H.M.S. "Enterprise" were surrounded by the crowd and were about to be mobbed. The police came to their rescue and got them extricated. They were then put in a car and escorted by two reserve constables to their destination.

The crowd invaded the compounds of the High Court and set fire to a motor car. A lot of confusion

prevailed, the judges were perturbed, the military was sent for and the Commissioner of Police and the Chief Presidency Magistrate arrived on the scene. The Magistrate spoke a few words to the crowd in Tamil asking them to disperse, and later read the sections in the Riot Act. The mob not receding, orders were given to open fire. Ten constables formed into a line and opened fire. Only one round of shot was allowed. At first four buck shots were fired as a warning. Seeing that this had not any effect, six balls were fired, injuring three, of whom two died, one on the spot and another the next morning. The shooting did not improve matters and the crowds became more defiant. They did not leave the place and gathered there for a long time afterwards.

A small military force arrived to guard the High Court. The police were then relieved, leaving the situation in the hands of the military.

An urgent meeting unusually well-attended of the European Association was held on the evening of the 8th February at Hotel Bosotto to consider the seriousness of the situation. Sir Alexander MacDoughall, who took the chair, began by saying :

“ You are all aware either by bitter personal experience or from accounts that have appeared in the local Press of the serious disturbances that occurred in Madras on Friday, the 3rd instant on the occasion of the ‘ hartal ’ that was called for by certain political parties to show their disapproval of an arrival in India of the Simon Commission. . . .

“ Many of you, I know, have suffered grave bodily injury, have been exposed to the risk of life itself and have had your property considerably damaged. . . .

“ There are few Europeans, if any in this country, who do not sympathise with Indian aspirations but I consider those aspirations should be attained

by constitutional means rather than by bloodshed and violence. . . . 'Hartal,' as I understand the meaning of it, is passive resistance, a peaceful method of showing a people's disapproval of any action of Government they may disagree with."

That might be "an ancient custom," continued the speaker, but, in modern practice it has only led to "dire results." He deplored that a peaceful city like Madras should have begun to copy the ways of more violent places in India. All this could, he thought, be traced to "the preaching of the non-violent cult," which Sir Alexander felt had taken

"the turn of inflammatory speeches, ridiculing authority and a disregard for law and order."

Inflammatory speeches were delivered from a thousand platforms every day. The ridiculing of authority was confined not only to the towns where the more educated urban population lived, it was carried into the hearts of the villages. The Congress had their branches throughout the country. They had won the hearts of the people, fired the imagination of youths of the land with flaming ideals of independence. "If we cannot bend the British Raj," their orators say in various languages, "let us at least break their prestige." A "hartal" like the one which Madras witnessed on the day of the Commission's landing in India, to which the ruined shops, the injured Europeans and the unfortunate dead bore gruesome evidence, would not have been possible had the old "Prestige" for "Sahib," remained. Either "Prestige" must "stoop to conquer," in the name of reforms, or unsheathe the sword of repression.

Sir Alexander MacDoughall said :

"No people in the world have fought a harder battle for freedom of speech and opinion than the British and the freedom that is enjoyed by the people of the United Kingdom is given to all her

Colonies and Dependencies. That freedom, however, carries certain responsibilities which should prevent free speech developing into licence.

"The cult of licence has been preached in this city for months past and the preachers have ignored the sign of the times. In other parts of India we have witnessed the results of masses of people inflamed by the preaching of doctrines they failed to understand.

"Congress Leaders in Madras have been carrying on the 'Hartal' propaganda for months past, calling meetings of every class of the people and exhorting them to obey the Congress orders.

"The results of propaganda of this nature in other parts of the country are well known. The people of Madras are in no way different from the people in other parts of India and the scenes that occurred elsewhere should have been expected here and preparations to meet them made accordingly.

"Leaders in every movement should always be found in the forefront. After all their talk one would have expected the self-appointed leaders of the 'Hartal' in Madras to have been on the scene from early morning, guiding their followers in ways of peace, exhorting them to live up to their ideals of non-violence and preserve law and order.

"We find the opposite to be the case however. One or two did turn out about noon, but the majority sheltering themselves behind the 'Hartal' Committee's order remained indoors till 4.30 and then calmly state without the slightest investigation the disturbances were caused by the organised hooliganism of the Anti-Boycotters.

"Men who can make themselves believe the Boycotters acted throughout the day in the manner of angels are talking with their tongues in their cheeks, not expecting to be believed.

"I am pleased, however, to observe that at least one local Indian paper has had the courage to state in a leading article the serious disturbances in the City were ultimately attributable to three things, one of which was the 'lamentable failure of Leadership at the critical moment.'

"In spite of all that has happened, however, these same leaders, against the advice of friends have proclaimed another 'Hartal' on the 19th inst., the day the Commission are expected to arrive in Madras.

"If this is persisted in, scenes similar to those of last Friday are likely to be enacted on that day. One is glad to learn that the Government are alive to the situation and from orders published to-day we believe the City will be saved from further scenes of violence.

"It may be said that on the 3rd instant the situation was underestimated, due perhaps to the assurance from Swaraj Leaders they were sufficiently well-organised to control their followers. The fallacy of this, however, was soon made apparent as trouble developed quickly, and had sterner measures been taken earlier the later trouble might have been avoided.

"Whether the Police were there in sufficient force to cope with the crowds I am not in a position to say, nor do I offer any criticism. It would not, however, be out of place to make a few comments and leave you to form your own judgment. Many of the incidents of the day have been related to me by eye-witnesses and in proof of their statements have shown me their injuries.

"Numbers experienced trouble in reaching their offices in the morning, During the day business in the busiest part of the town was at a standstill. The High Court was attacked and I think the

Christian College and other buildings in that section received the attention of the rioters.

"The worst aspect of all however is the fact that in spite of all that occurred during the day it was in the evening that most of the stone-throwing at motor cars took place. It is this particular aspect of the affair where the authorities are most open to criticism. We do think that incidents of this nature could have been avoided.

"To sum up, we believe the disturbances were due to the calling of the 'Hartal' which no reasonable man could believe would be peaceful in view of all that has been said and written from platform and press in recent times. The Government will, I trust, make due enquiry into the whole affair, and if responsibility can be fixed on any one, prosecution will follow.

"The matter of compensation to persons whose property was damaged will, I trust, receive the attention of Government also, so that in addition to physical injury they will not have to bear financial loss as well."

The following resolutions were unanimously adopted by the European Association of Madras :

"This meeting convened by the European Association desires to place on record its strong condemnation of the riots that occurred on the 3rd instant.

"It considers the duty of the Government to take immediate steps to fix the responsibility for the disorders and to take necessary action against those found responsible.

"It considers it is the duty of the Government to hold an immediate enquiry to ascertain why adequate precautions were not taken on the 3rd instant for the protection of law-abiding citizens of Madras.

"It considers that the Government should compensate those who suffered both in person and

property and should endeavour to recover the amount from whomsoever they consider responsible.

"This meeting convened by the European Association welcomes the evidence afforded by the order under section 144 C.P.C. served on the Simon Boycott Committee that the Government are alive to the danger of a further 'hartal' on the 19th instant and ask that Government will take the fullest previous precautions to ensure that if a 'hartal' is persisted in on the 19th instant the Public Peace is not again disturbed and that the citizens of Madras will on this occasion receive adequate protection from violence and intimidation."

Mahatma Gandhi, who was feeling despondent since the suspension of the non-co-operation movement, felt inspired by the "hartal" which indicated a new awakening. Mahatma wrote as follows in his weekly organ, *The Young India* :

"With great deliberation and not without the exercise of great self-restraint have I hitherto refrained practically from writing anything about the boycott of the Statutory Commission. I recognised the force of the appeal made to me not to meddle with or influence the boycott movement but to let the various parties manage it themselves. I recognised that my interference was bound to bring the masses more prominently into the movement and might possibly embarrass the promoters. Now that the great demonstration is over I feel free to say a word. I tender my congratulations to the organisers for the very great success they achieved on the 'hartal' day. It did my soul good to see Liberals, Independents and Congressmen ranged together on the same platform. I could not but admire the courage of the students of Government Colleges in absenting themselves from their Colleges for the sake of the national

cause. All the world over students are playing a most important and effective part in shaping and strengthening national movements. It would be monstrous if the students of India did less.

"My object now is to draw attention to the fact that the very success of the 'hartal' will be turned against us if it is not followed up by sufficient and persistent action. We must belie the prophecy of Lord Sinha that the 'hartal' was but a passing cloud. Let us bear in mind that notwithstanding our position, the Commission backed as it is by British bayonets will go its own way. Where it cannot get *bona fide* recognition, it will be manufactured for it. Did not so-called deputation on behalf of 'untouchables' welcome the Commission as its true deliverers? Claiming to know the 'untouchables' more than the members of the deputation, I make bold to assert that they no more represented the 'untouchables' than would a party of Japs for instance.

"If then we are to ensure a complete boycott, not only will there have to be a joint organisation by all the parties for carrying it out and possibly picketting, wherever the Commission goes, but there must be some further demonstration of the nation's strength. Even though mine may be a voice in the wilderness and even of the risk of repeating a thousandth time the same old story, I suggest that there is nothing before the nation other than boycott of foreign cloth which can be brought about effectively and quickly. But, like all great undertakings, it requires planning and organising. It requires sustained and vigilant effort by a party of earnest, able and honest men and women exclusively devoted to the task. It was not an easy task. If it was, it would not produce the great results that are promised for it. It must evoke the best in the nation before it is accomplished. But let us also frankly

recognise that if we cannot organise this one thing, we shall organise nothing else.

"Let me make my own position clear. I have no desire even now to interfere with the present evolution of the national movement except through occasional writings. This is written, therefore, by way of a humble appeal to the different parties who are jointly acting in order to vindicate national honour."

The boycott of British cloth, so far as the Mahatma is concerned, is not aimed at attacking Britain's trade. That is why instead of "boycotting British goods," as desired by the Congress, he includes in boycott only one class of goods and that is the piece-goods and not from one country but from all foreign countries. Thus the Mahatma thinks his movement is not tainted by vendetta. But his followers freely say that England's chief customer is India for piece-goods and by boycotting foreign piece-goods English manufacturers will not have the chance of sending their articles through their continental agents. Their object is "to attack British trade for which alone England holds India." They believe once England is made to realise that by holding India in political bondage, she will suffer in trade, whereas by releasing her, her trade-relations will improve, Napoleon's England of "shop keepers" will change her attitude and befriend India.

The situation had set the provincial satraps thinking. After repudiating the mentality that revelled in mass action based on appeals to the emotion and the exaggeration of the defects of administration and misrepresentation of the aim and object of British endeavour as represented by the policy of Reforms, by the incessant preaching of the gospel of race-hatred, Sir Malcolm Hailey, the Governor of the Punjab, referred to the present situation* which, though

* Speech of His Excellency the Governor of the Punjab at the European Association Dinner at Lahore on 25th February, 1928.

“not one of immediate danger or such ~~as~~ need cause us real apprehension, but containing potentialities which may reasonably cause us some uneasiness. The wave of agitation as we know was bound to rise again; that was inevitable; the comparative quiet of the last few years could not last and if the Statutory Commission had not presented an opportunity for its recrudescence, some other occasion must have been found. And as for the real feeling which lies behind a movement of this kind, let me say this: It is proper that we discriminate between the extreme section which will always be irreconcilable and a large body of people who have a genuine ambition for further advance towards responsible government and towards larger participation by Indians in the administration of their own country.”

The last sentence reveals the grasp which the gifted Governor of the Punjab has of the Indian situation. The irreconcilable and the more reasonable elements have made cause common in spite of conflicting motives. The extreme Congressman would have boycotted any Commission appointed by the British Parliament, whether or not it had included Indians, because he denies the authority of the British Parliament, he repudiates the constitution from which Parliament derives that authority. His own reason for repudiating the constitution is that it has “no sanction behind it,” that it is imposed from above. No constitution would be acceptable to him which is not produced by the people themselves and which has not called into existence that power which in Ireland and in the Colonies made it possible for the British Parliament to accept the latter’s constitution without making substantial alterations.

The Moderates outside the Congress—and some belonging to the Congress also—would not boycott the Commission if they had not been excluded from it.

This exclusion has undermined their position in the public estimation. It has made their slogan of co-operation the butt of ridicule. "Co-operate and be damned," yell the Extremist Press. Unwilling to be condemned and eliminated from public life, anxious to get into the legislatures to continue their good work, they cannot afford to ignore the attitude of the people and their own place in society and politics. Even such Moderates as are not wholly convinced of the wisdom of boycott felt that their's was no better than Hobson's choice.

If the Commission were to recommend some substantial reforms, the Moderates could be depended on for tearing away from the extremists and working the reforms as in the past. The Moderates' own ideas of "substantial reforms" is introduction of full responsibility in the Provinces and partial responsibility in the Central Government, reserving, if so desired, to the white men the control of the Army, the Navy, the Foreign Affairs and affairs dealing with Indian States. The Nationalist on the other hand wants "the whole hog"—complete Dominion Home Rule. The Extremists, of course, believe in independence. They do not "want" independence, because they say it cannot be given as a Christmas gift, it has always been taken by other nations by force and will have to be taken by Indians also by force. There are two sections among the Extremists. The violent revolutionary who believes in brute force, the non-violent revolutionary who believes in Mahatma Gandhi's "soul force," though the Mahatma is not a revolutionary himself and believes in British connection.

It is obviously an insight into these undercurrents of Indian politics and parties which only the grant of responsibility could crystallise that induced a distinguished servant of the crown of the eminence of Sir Malcolm Hailey to observe that :

“ We (Englishmen) should not be true to our own traditions, our own history, our own national character if we did not share in the desire of Indians for further progress towards political independence and administrative authority. You, Sir (turning to the chairman), have spoken of the sympathy of your Association with Indian aspirations. It lies on our consciences to make that sympathy a reality. You will not misunderstand me when I say that it must not end as a term of courtesy, covering a refusal at every turn, to consider any state which would assist India, in however small a degree, to realise those aspirations. I would rather see an honest and outright refusal to consider any advance in any direction than I would see Britishers commit themselves to a sympathy which is merely conventional but actually insincere. But if the conviction is sincere, then we must have the courage to make it effective. Nowhere has constitutional advance been achieved by timidity in face of risks and hazards which it involves, there are risks we must take and there are responsibilities which we must leave posterity to shoulder.”

Noble words these, the value of which is enhanced by the fact that they were uttered when the situation was very gloomy. That the Commission fully understood the situation would be clear from the letter which its Chairman wrote to His Excellency the Viceroy and Governor-General.

CHAPTER VI.

THE OLIVE BRANCH.

SIR JOHN SIMON realised that the atmosphere was charged with feelings of distrust and discontent, though there was no personal hostility towards individual members of the Commission. He lost no time therefore in addressing an important letter to the Viceroy, a copy of which was immediately placed in the hands of the members of the Central Legislature. I make no apology for quoting the letter in full, as it shows the extent to which Sir John Simon was prepared to go in order to meet the opposition :

New Delhi, Feb 7.

“ Your Excellency :—In your speech to the Central Legislature on Thursday, you laid renewed emphasis on the full discretion as to the methods which have, from the beginning, been left in the hands of the Indian Statutory Commission, and I myself, as Chairman, on landing in India next day, authorised the issue of a statement on behalf of the Commission that it hoped without delay to announce the line of procedure which it would propose to follow. Evidence accumulates that throughout India there is much uncertainty as to the manner in which we may be expected to exercise our functions, and even considerable misunderstanding as to what we conceive those functions to be, while amidst many messages of welcome and encouragement, we note that speeches are being made and resolutions passed which are based on a complete, though doubtless

genuine misconception of our intentions. It is my plain duty, therefore, as Chairman, to set out forthwith the true position as we regard it, and since, on this preliminary visit, there is not likely to be any formal sitting of the Commission when the statement could be made, I venture to address this letter to your Excellency.

"We understand that the Government of India and the Local Governments have been engaged for some time past in preparing the material which they might put before the Commission. We have not seen these documents, and do not know how far they may consist of matters of fact, and how far of matters of opinion, or whether they deal with past events or with suggestions for the future, but whatever they are, instead of dealing with them by ourselves, we wish to propose that they and the evidence given in explanation or amplification of them should come before a joint free conference over which I should preside, consisting of the seven British Commissioners, and a corresponding body of representatives chosen by the Indian Legislatures (just as we ourselves have been chosen by the British Parliament).

"We put forward the plan of a joint free conference not only because we should welcome the assistance of colleagues from the Indian Legislatures, but because we think it is only right and fair and in the truest interests of India and Britain alike that opportunity should be provided for such memoranda and testimony to be scrutinised, and, if necessary, elucidated from the Indian side. On free and equal terms, we suggest, therefore, that the two houses of the Central Legislature should in due course be invited to choose from their non-official members a Joint Committee which might conveniently be seven in number, and that each local Legislative Council should be asked to constitute a similar

body. The Indian side of the Conference would consist, when Central subjects were being dealt with, of those first named. In a province, the Indian wing would primarily consist of the provincial members, but in order that the Central Joint Committee may not have a partial view of the material put before it, we should be glad if arrangements could be arrived at which would enable its members, or some of them, to be present as an additional element at provincial sittings. We have no wish to dictate the composition of the Indian wing to the Conference in more detail and we should greatly prefer that the precise scheme should be reached by agreement between the different elements in India concerned.

"Our main object will be met so long as the arrangement is one which secures that the Indian side of the Joint Conference includes on appropriate occasions those who are able to speak for the Provincial Council, just as the Joint Committee would speak for the Central Legislature, and so long as the members representing India sitting with us do not amount to an unwieldy number. We assume, of course, that just as we ourselves are a body selected from all British parties and both Houses of Parliament, so our Indian counterpart would be, so far as may be, truly representative.

"Two matters remain to be dealt with; the question of evidence other than that above referred to, and the question of the report. I wish to deal candidly and clearly with both.

"Some of us have had considerable experience of the method of joint conference as applied both to industrial and political questions, and it is quite clear to us that each side of the conference will require, from time to time, to meet by itself. We see no reason, however, why evidence from public and representative bodies and from individuals should

not normally be given to the Conference as a whole, just as evidence presented by or on behalf of the various Governments would be. If a case arises when this general plan cannot be followed, I should make no secret of it, and should ask my colleagues in the Joint Free Conference when, as I hope, they learn to have faith in my sense of fairness, to accept from me such account of the matter as I can give them on behalf of the Commission, with due regard to the reason why the testimony has been separately received. I imagine that the Indian side may find occasions when they would think it well to act in the same way.

"As regards the report, I feel it is necessary to restate the true function of the Commission and its place in the general scheme which you announced last November.

"The Commission is in no sense an instrument either of the Government of India or of the British Government, but enters on the duty laid upon it by the King-Emperor as a completely independent and unfettered body composed of members of Parliament who approach the Indian legislators as colleagues. It is not an executive or legislating body authorised to pronounce decisions about the future Government of India before these decisions can be reached. The full process, of which the present investigation is a first step, must be completed, including the opportunity for the views of the Indian Legislature, among other bodies being presented by delegations, in London, to the joint Parliamentary Committee.

"The present Commission is only authorised to report and make recommendations, and in this report we desire to include a faithful account of the opinions and aspirations prevalent in India, and of the concrete proposals for constitutional reform so far as these are put before us. The British Commissioners,

therefore, are bound to be solely responsible for the statement of the effect upon their own minds of the investigation as a whole. We shall report to the authority by which we have been constituted just as (if the conference is set up) the joint committee would, we presume, be entitled to report its conclusions to the Central Legislature. It is obvious that those documents should be prepared and presented simultaneously. There are well known constitutional means by which a document emanating from the joint committee and presented to the Central Legislature can be forwarded to, and made available for the British Parliament, but if the Indian Joint Committee would prefer it, we would make its report an annexe to our own document so that both might be presented to the King-Emperor and made public at the same moment.

"Above all I would urge that one of the merits of the method of joint Conference is that, besides securing due recognition of equal status, it provides the opportunity for that free exchange of views and mutual influence which are best calculated to promote the largest measure of agreement that is possible.

"Our present visit is preliminary and the sittings of the Joint Free Conference, if it is set up, would not begin till October, but we make public our suggestions at once not only in order to clear the air, but in order to show ourselves available for any conference about any matters of procedure which this statement does not adequately cover. The Commission is, of course, bound to carry through its appointed task in any event and discharge to the full the duty cast upon it, but we are undertaking this duty only after having made it known that the method of collaboration on honourable and equal terms is open and that we put it forward in all sincerity and goodwill. We will only add that in making these

proposals we are confident that we are correctly interpreting the intentions of the British Parliament.

"The carrying out of our proposals will require at a later date that the Council of State, the Legislative Assembly and the local Legislative Councils should be moved to elect their representatives who would take part in the Joint Conference, and the Commission will be glad if the Government of India will take such steps as seem appropriate for this purpose in due course.

"I have the honour to be,

"Your Excellency's obedient servant,

"(Sd.) JOHN SIMON."

The Congress Party of the Central Legislature held a meeting immediately, at which were also present two prominent Mohammedan members of the Congress Working Committee who belong to the anti-Reforms and anti-Allegiance group who swear by independence, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and Malauna Mohamed Ali, the former a Persian and Urdu scholar who does not know English, the latter a product of Oxford who brought the Muslim masses into the Congress which was till then a Hindu body, during the non-co-operation movement. The meeting was also attended by Dr. M. A. Ansari, the President of the Congress for the year, a man of balanced views, who preached to the country the wisdom of co-operation inside the Legislatures which he said were no place for bullying the powerful British.

The meeting was held in the house of Sriman Srinivasa Iyengar, the Deputy Leader of the Congress Party. Mr. Iyengar was once a responsible member of the Government. He was the Advocate General and Legal Adviser to Lord Pentland's Government of Madras, which, interned Mrs. Annie Besant and her two principal associates, Mr. B. P. Wadia and Mr. George Arundale, without trial and which demanded

the maximum security of Rs.10,000 from Mrs. Besant's daily paper, *New India*, under the old Press Act, since repealed. Long years after when he came into touch with Gandhi, he resigned his Advocate Generalship and his title of C.I.E. and took the plunge into the Congress movement.

The Congress gentlemen treated Sir John's letter as a serious blow aimed at the unity which had been unexpectedly brought about by the blunder of Whitehall. Sir John having made amends, the Moderates might yet be undeceived and leave the uncomfortable position of hob-nobbing with the Extremists. The Congress meeting abruptly ended. It needed no consideration to reject the letter, because it had accepted neither the Reforms nor the idea of a Commission to enquire into India's fitness for Swaraj as it had no doubt that India was as fit as England. What the gentlemen were anxious about was to prevent the unwary Moderates, Responsivists, Independents, Muslim Leaguers and Hindu Sabha-ites, parties with antagonistic principles and conflicting ideas, from being caught in the trap. "He is not Sir John Simon, but Sir John Siren," exclaimed a Swarajist wag, to the amusement of the perturbed Legislators who walked across to the house of Pundit Madan Mohan Malaviya, where all the Parties were to meet, to discuss the attitude that they should adopt towards the latest offer of Sir John Simon.

Pundit Madan Mohan Malaviya is not officially the leader of any party in the Assembly. Once Mr. C. R. Das tempted him into Extremism with the leadership of the Swaraj Party, but the Pundit preferred to follow the fruitful policy of co-operating with the British Raj. He is the one man who, on the Hindu side, holds the key-position. He alone can "deliver the goods" so far as the Hindus are concerned. The Pundit is not a young firebrand. A suave gentleman of peaceful ways, he is over sixty-five years old. The

Pundit and his party's differences with the Swarajist Congressmen are fundamental. Unlike the latter, the former accept the constitutional superiority of the British Parliament on which they look upon as "the august Mother of freedom." They are proud of their loyalty to the king, his heirs and successors. They believe in British connection, which they attribute in Disraeli's phrase to "an inscrutable providence," who brought together two distant races of different tongues and complexions to solve the question of the human kind. And yet they are more keen than anybody else about the uncompromising boycott of the British Commission. To-day Punditjee is travelling long distances and addressing thousands on that subject.

After eight months' absence in Europe, I was returning home. The Pundit happened at some way-side station to rush into my compartment, as the train did not stop there for long. I wondered what that huge crowd meant. "Of course, they are all for Simon boycott," said the Pundit. I rubbed my eyes to find that the venerable Pundit Madan Mohan Malaviya of the Hindu University was in the forefront of the boycott movement! "What? When did you get into this?" I asked him. And the Pundit who, by the way, is a fine conversationalist, said that there could be no parley with the Simon Commission, because Indians have been excluded from it. During his forty-five years of public life, the Pundit has witnessed several Royal Commissions, appeared as a witness before many and served as a member on one of them, but had never seen the exclusion of Indians from any Commission. The Pundit was very bitter against Lord Birkenhead. I said Lord Birkenhead was a much misunderstood man. He is no longer that youthful mythological *F. E. Smith*, being himself close on sixty years of age. I referred to the part Lord Birkenhead had played in the settlement of the Irish question. Lord Birkenhead had "to go against him-

self" in regard to Ireland, as Mr. Lloyd George would put it. It is very difficult for any man to go against himself, but the moment Lord Birkenhead realised that the "Rebels" had a constructive head, the task was easier. He had to face the harsh criticism of old comrades like Lord Carson. Once convinced that the Irish problem needed settlement he devoted all his wonderful energy and brain-power for it. Even so, if Lord Birkenhead is impressed, India's battle would be won. However, the Pundit was of opinion that the history of Ireland showed that India had to adopt a policy of self-help before she could change England's policy.

"We have burnt our boats," said the Pundit emphatically. There could be no excuse for excluding Indians from the Commission. It was not in Sir John's power to include Indians. All that he could do was to give as much opportunity and facility to the Committees of the Central Legislature to influence the decision of the Simon Commission, to write a report of their own, if they choose and to annexe it to their own report. What more could Sir John Simon do?

The Pundit's attitude remained unchanged by Sir John's letter. The Moderates and Muslims read and re-read and inwardly digested the letter and decided to persist in their attitude not to have anything to do with the Commission at any stage or in any form. Lest the newspaper editors in the country should waver, lest those who have been sitting on the fence should go over to the side of Sir John, lest there should be any misunderstanding as to the considered opinion of the leaders, after a brief discussion, they telegraphed to the Press the condemnation of a document which had taken Sir John Simon, one of the biggest brains in England, full fourteen days on the boat, to prepare :

"We have most carefully considered the line of procedure indicated in the statement of Sir John Simon issued to-day, but our objections to the

Commission as constituted and the scheme as announced are based on principles which remain unaffected by it. In the circumstances, we must adhere to our decision that we cannot have anything to do with the Commission at any stage or in any form."

Mr. Mohomed Ali Jinnah, who holds the key-position from the Muslim point of view, as the Pundit does from the Hindu standpoint, dictated this laconic message. A self-respecting Indian, he said, had no other alternative. If we are not fit, according to the British Government, to sit with Sir John Simon as his equals, surely we do not want to have anything to do with this Commission. But Sir John himself has asked the members of the Central Legislature to form a Joint Committee, the members of which will be honoured "colleagues" of the Commission. Mr. Jinnah's reply is when members of the committee are not permitted to examine certain secret evidence or see some confidential papers which can only be seen by members of the British Commission, how can they be said to be "colleagues" with the same rights? "We do not want to be colleagues in words, but in reality." Mr. Jinnah, however, agreed that it was not in the Commission's power—though its chairman need not have added the extra disqualification in regard to certain secret witnesses—to confer equality of position and privilege on the Joint Committee of the Indian Legislature. The same source from which Sir John derived his authority must give life and power to the Indian Committee. What the Indian committee wants, is not to be an appendage of the Commission but an appointment from the King. Complete Home Rule, point out the Indian Moderates, may not be an easy thing to grant at one stroke, but surely the appointment of a simultaneous Indian Parliamentary Commission by His Imperial Majesty is not too much to ask for.

The Pundit and Mr. Jinnah have united. Only common opposition to the Commission could unite the lamb and the lion, the Hindu and the Muslim leader, whose followers out in the country, until yesterday, were breaking each others' heads. "Good cometh out of evil," felt Sir Malcolm Hailey, the Governor of the Punjab, whose province had the worst experience of communalism. Addressing a European audience, Sir Malcolm Hailey said :*

"The movement has brought together in a common opposition leaders of different parties who seemed lately to be divided by mutual jealousy and mistrust. If that process spread further and resulted in bridging over of the communal differences, which have been so destructive of India's peace, then it would be a real gain and we would hardly regret that the bond of reconciliation has been found in opposition to a measure of His Majesty's Government."

Hindus and Mohommedans were meeting day after day to settle their differences at a Round Table Conference in the house of the Congress President.

In the meantime, a motion was brought forward in the Assembly by the Leader of the Nationalist Party proposing a boycott of the Commission by the Assembly. This motion was carried by 68 votes to 62. These 62 votes against the boycott show on analysis that 12 elected Indians voted against the policy of boycott, the remainder of the 62 votes being cast by officials, Europeans and nominated members. In the Council of State 34 voted for co-operation with the Commission and 13 against. In analysing these votes, one finds that the majority was made up of 16 officials, 7 nominated members, 3 elected Europeans, and 8

* Speech delivered by His Excellency the Governor at the European Association Dinner at Lahore on 26th February, 1928.

elected Indians. The minority of 13 was composed of 12 elected and 1 nominated Indian.

The European non-official members took the Indians to severe task for rejecting unceremoniously a document so carefully prepared, so far-reaching in its effect and so noble in its generosity :

"What was the reason for this precipitate and unceremonious rejection of a considered and well-weighed document drawn up by one of the most eminent of British statesmen," said the Home Member amidst applause. "Was it because those who urged this precipitate step on this House and upon all others concerned were conscious that that document was a formidable and convincing reply to the position which they themselves have hitherto with equal precipitancy maintained? Was it that they sought by this to prevent the contents of that document from receiving full and fair consideration from reasonable and moderate opinion throughout the country?"*

The leader of the European non-official group, Sir Darcy Lindsay, repeated the charge with deadly effect. He attributed

"the indecent haste in dealing with a document of immense importance to the people of India to the possible fear of the Congress Party that without a safe lead the Press of India might approve of a favourable comment on the procedure the statement laid down." (Applause from the European Benches.)†

Sir Darcy bitterly complained that there was no constructive proposal from any Opposition group.

"It would appear," he said in disgust, "that only a miracle can soften the heart of the Congress

* Legislative Assembly Debates Vol. I, No. 10, page 405.

† Ibid., pages 415 and 416.

dictators to call off the boycott. Why not come out in the open with the straightforward statement that in the opinion of some of the leaders of political thought the Commission is not wanted as the country is not yet ready for the inquiry ? " (Applause from the European Benches.)

Honourable members of the Congress Party : The country resents the inquiry.

Sir Darcy Lindsay : The inquiry has got to be made.

Honourable members of the Congress Party : Why ?

Sir Darcy Lindsay : According to the procedure laid down in the reformed constitution that was granted to India in 1919, the inquiry has got to be conducted.

Honourable members of the Congress Party : We do not accept it.

Mr. S. Srinivasa Iyengar : We want an inquiry into the fitness of the British people to rule India.

Sir Darcy Lindsay : I say advisedly, some of the leaders, as there are others who welcome the inquiry and do not hold this view. I am willing to admit that the boycott agitation is very spectacular and in that respect a valuable advertising medium, but it cannot be effective.

Sir Darcy fully trusted that the Commission when it returned next October would pursue its inquiry both effectively and earnestly,

"resulting in good to India, for it is certain that there are many voices, and important voices at that, who desire to be heard in spite of the boycott."

The reply to Sir Darcy came from Mr. Jayakar, who was once a staunch Swarajist, but his intellect was starved by the arid attitude of uniform opposition, and therefore he joined the Nationalist group, with a constructive purpose in view. It must also be said

that until a week before this debate and before Sir John had issued his statement, Mr. Jayakar had stood out with a handful of Maharastrian Nationalists asking the country to suspend its judgment and wait and see if co-operation with the British Commission was not possible on equal terms. Day after day Mr. Jayakar and his faithful band was attacked in the Press furiously. His opinion, therefore, was valuable to a House which cheered him as he rose to speak :

“ My Honourable friend Sir Darcy Lindsay says, ‘ Oh, you never made any constructive proposals.’ Good gracious ! When this bungling Government had set the whole of this country aflame with their folly, when throughout the country from one end to the other there were reverberations of recrimination and resentment, a few of us kept our heads cool, and foreshadowed a possible avenue of exploration of a remedy.* The Messiah was coming with his message of hope and deliverance. We waited in breathless expectation. Public opinion was stiffening in the meanwhile ; one leader after another was going across the border. I spoke to friends who I thought had the ear of Government. There was no response. We waited until the Messiah came and his message of deliverance was uttered. It proved a veritable gospel of delusion. I am told, Sir, we did not spend even ten minutes on the examination of the words of that message of hope. Those who say that do us injustice. We carefully studied that utterance with the attention due to its distinguished authorship. Let me tell Sir John Simon from the floor of this House that on this side there are equally clever men, who can see with a god’s sense, through truth and its apparitions ; whether anything *bona fide*, anything real is intended, or it

* Meeting of 16th November, 1927, held in Poona by the Respon-sivist group.

is merely a tangle of words. I have no hesitation, Sir, with all the esteem I feel for the distinguished author of the statement, in saying that it is a complete travesty—I know I am using a strong word—that it is a complete mockery of the equality that I, and men of my way of thinking, have asked for. What did we want? You will allow me, Sir, to quote one small passage from the manifesto which we sent out in November last. In the very manifesto to which reference was made by Sir Darcy Lindsay this is what we said and I want my honourable friends on both sides of the House to listen to it with care.

‘India desires that her accredited representatives should occupy in the proposed investigation the position of being the judges and architects of her future destiny, with equal status and with co-ordinate powers with the representatives of the British people. India’s claim as stated above was the minimum that would satisfy present requirements and unless the same was secured it would not be possible for the honour and self-respect of India to co-operate or assist in the work of this proposed Commission.’

“I ask Sir Darcy Lindsay to judge Sir John’s statements by this test, and say whether they, either the first or the second, give us this equality? I do not think he will have the least hesitation, with his acumen, to say that they do not.”

Mr. Jinnah then rose amidst loud and continued applause. The leader of the Independent Party is undoubtedly the most effective and polished debater in the Assembly. He seldom uses a complex sentence or a complicated expression. He avoids the trick of oratory which is not his trade, though he rises to theatrical heights, which makes one suspect that Mr.

Jinnah was known to the stage at one time of his life. This is true. As a young man, who was "eating his terms," at one of those inns of courts in London, Mr. Jinnah had to face the sudden freaks of fortune. He decided to earn his living and wages for education by acting on the stage. This was about thirty-five years ago. Lord Birkenhead once summed up the philosophy of his life :

"The great Disraeli did not disdain the name adventurer and I am myself willing to be called one in the same sense. Life is an adventure. He who, starting with nothing, fights hard while conceiving ambitiously, must be an adventurer."*

Mr. Jinnah in that sense is an adventurer. There is no job in the gift of the Government which has not been within his reach for the last five years. But Mr. Jinnah who maintains a very high style of life, which a French aristocrat might well envy, was not prepared to sacrifice his practice at the Bombay bar, of which he is right at the top, nor was he prepared to indulge in that impossible sacrifice for a Nationalist, the suspension of conviction. Mr. Jinnah is one of the two men to-day who maintain the boycott of the Simon Commission. If Mr. Jinnah's spirit had flagged, if his faith had become dim, the boycott would have become an affair of one community. Not even Sir John Simon can deny that responsible members of both communities with an admirable record of loyalty to the king and sobriety in politics have boycotted the Commission.

Why Sir John's last letter to the Viceroy had left Mr. Jinnah and his party cold was stated in his reply to the leader of the European group whom he could not leave unanswered :

* *Lord Birkenhead*, by "Ephesian." Mills & Boon.

"The principle for which we are fighting is that we want for the Indian representatives equal status and equal power. And I ask, is there any man in this House of the meanest intelligence who can say that that is given to India under the present scheme? What is the good of telling me that Sir John Simon has written a letter to his Excellency the Viceroy laying down the line of procedure? That has nothing to do with the issue. Have Sir John Simon and the members of the Commission the power to give the Indian representatives the same status and power, when they themselves have received their status and power on the Resolution adopted by Parliament submitting the names of the Commission for the approval of His Majesty the King Emperor? Sir John Simon himself says that he is independent both of the British Government and the Indian Government. He has received his appointment from the King Emperor. How then can he give what he has received from another authority? And that is the question and the principle upon which we have taken our stand, namely, that we want an equal status and equal power given to the representatives of India for the purpose of participating in the framing of the new constitution of the Government of India. What is the good of running away from the issue? Nobody disputes that ultimately the sovereign Legislature which will finally legislate and enact the constitution for the Government of India is the British Parliament. We are told that because the final, ultimate, sovereign Legislature is Parliament and they will legislate and enact the constitution for the Government of India, therefore, even in the inquiry stage, the investigation stage, we are to appear merely as witnesses and subordinate or auxiliary Committees. Well, that is the device substituted for excluding Indians from the personnel of the

Commission. You say, 'a Parliamentary Commission shall be appointed; no Indian.' Why? Because these are the men—I will not go into the details—who alone are said to be qualified to report and recommend to the Parliament; nobody else. And then, having excluded Indians, you say, 'We will give you this device of Committees,' for whom Sir John Simon and the Commission have graciously laid down the line of procedure. I never expected Sir John Simon to do anything more than what he has already done. He has, I concede, shown the utmost courtesy, and he has tried to make our position, which is absolutely subordinate and subsidiary, as pleasant by means of courtesy as he could possibly do in laying down the line of procedure—barring of course the point with regard to the evidence *in camera*. Again, another point is that not only the evidence is to be taken *in camera* by the Commission, when the Indian Committees would be asked politely to leave, but he has elucidated one more point, namely, that the committee of the Central Legislature, when the Commission go out to the provinces, will not constitute the Indian wing, but the real Indian wing will be the Committee of the provincial Legislature (*The Honourable Mr. J. Crearar* : 'Primarily'), and the Members of the Central Committee, if he thinks it in his discretion advisable, may be allowed to take such part as he may allow them. Now, Sir, I am told that we did not consider the letter of Sir John Simon sufficiently. A great charge has been made, and I am really surprised that the Home Member should have said it: I am not surprised that Sir Darcy Lindsay should have said it, for I can understand; he is a merchant after all, and to him, Sir, a document of this character seems a very complicated thing and requires reading and re-reading and sleeping over a couple of nights. But it is an open secret—I tell

Sir Darcy Lindsay and I tell my friend, the Home Member also—it has been an open secret. Sir, long before the debate took place in the Houses of Parliament, it was actually retailed in the newspapers as to what negotiations were going on between the Opposition and His Majesty's Government at Westminster and you have further only got to read the debates of the two Houses of Parliament and you will find that every word almost so far as the substance of this statement of Sir John Simon is concerned, is reproduced practically by the speech of Lord Olivier in the House of Lords and by Mr. Ramsay Macdonald and others in the House of Commons. It is substantially there. Now, Sir John Simon is annoyed, because we expressed our opinion without delay. We assure him that we had no desire to show him scant courtesy in dealing with this statement of his within half an hour and dispose of it as it is alleged : we had all the materials before us. We spent four hours even then in going through it. (*An Honourable Member* : 'Three.') I can assure you I had this statement in my hand at half-past five, and the decision was not arrived at before 10 o'clock. Therefore it is no use saying that is something new, something which was sprung upon us. Well, Sir, but what does it matter? I do not care one straw. Do you suggest to me that our objections to the constitution of this Commission and the scheme which are based on principle are removed by the statement contained in the letter of Sir John Simon? They are not; our objections, which, as I said before, are fundamental and based on principle, stand."

The position of the Independent and Nationalist parties is wholly different from that of the Congress. The former are loyal. If they oppose to-day the Simon Commission, it is with that loyal frankness with which

Mr. Jinnah has spoken. They are subjects of the King-Emperor as much as their British fellow-subjects. Why should they be judged, they ask, by an exclusive Commission of European fellow-subjects? Why should there not be a mixed Commission?

The position of the Congressmen was summed up in a wholly uncompromising speech by the leader of the Congress Party in the Legislative Assembly.

"Every party," said Pundit Motilal Nehru, "has its own reasons for the boycott, but so long as all parties are agreed on the boycott it does not matter for what reasons."

The Congress was not concerned with the personnel or the scheme of the Commission.

"We take our stand," said Pundit Nehru, "upon the broad principle that Parliament and the British public and the British Government have no shadow of a right to force a constitution upon us against our own will."

The Pundit emphasised that the goal of the Congress was "complete independence." In the opinion of the Pundit and the Congress,

"it is hypocrisy, it is dishonesty, to rely upon laws to which the people were no parties, to rely upon those laws to restrict the limits within which such measure of liberty is to be given. If you come to consider the question broadly, surely the proper thing to do is to approach it unhampered by any considerations which may arise from such laws or rules which have been intentionally passed year after year to withhold what you pretend you are now giving."

Thus the difference is clear between the Moderates and the Extremists. The latter will reject every Commission, the former will accept a Commission of

the right sort. On a similar occasion, when there was a tendency for the Moderates and the Extremists to unite their forces, Mr. (then) Morley separated the sheep from the goats. In justification of this decision, Lord Morley said :*

“ Yet we still hold that it would be the height of political folly for us at this moment to refuse to do all we can, with prudence and energy, to rally the Moderates to the cause of Government, simply because the policy will not satisfy the Extremists. Let us, if we can, rally the Moderates, and if we are told that the policy will not satisfy the Extremists, so be it. Our line will remain the same. It is the height of folly to refuse to rally sensible people, because we do not satisfy Extremists.”

There are two ways of rallying the Moderates : first by accepting their advice and withdrawing the present Commission or by adding Indian names to it, or by Royal proclamation assigning to the Central Legislative Indian Committee the rôle of an Indian Parliamentary Commission and equal authority with that of the British Parliamentary Commission ; secondly, by allowing the present Simon Commission to pursue the even tenor of its course unmindful of boycott, taking notice of the past demands of the boycotting parties and meeting them with a view to satisfy their political ambitions, so far as they are consistent with India's position as a loyal and integral part of the British Empire. But the rallying of the Moderates will not kill the movement for freedom.

“ Much of this movement,” said Lord Morley, “ arises from the fact that there is now a large body of educated Indians who have been fed, at our example and our instigation, upon some of the great teachers

* Lord Morley's speech to his constituents at Arbroath, 21st October, 1907.

and masters of this country--Milton, Burke, Macaulay, Mill, Spencer. Surely it is a mistake in us not to realise that these masters should have mighty force and irresistible influence. Who can be surprised that educated Indians who read those high masters and teachers of ours are intoxicated with the ideas of freedom, nationality, self-government, that breathe the breath of life in those inspiring and illuminating pages? Who of us that has the privilege in the days of our youth, at college or at home, of turning over those golden chapters, and seeing that lustrous firmament dawn over our youthful imaginations; who of us can forget, shall I call it the intoxication and rapture, with which we strove to make friends with truth, knowledge, beauty, freedom? Then why should we be surprised that young Indians feel the same movement of mind when they are made free of our own immortals?"

Not much intelligence is required to follow the above lines chalked out by Lord Morley. Any third-rate politician in the India Office could achieve that object. A first-class original brain is not required for that purpose.

If Lord Birkenhead wanted to sail smoothly, he would not have gone into unknown and uncharted seas. He would not have left the coast-line of Morley. But the situation which faces Lord Birkenhead to-day is entirely different from the one which faced Lord Morley.

If Lord Morley's policy had been followed, Lord Birkenhead would have included some Indian Moderates on the Commission. They would have written a dissenting report, which would have been shelved. If they had agreed with the majority and produced a unanimous report, as in the case of the Lee Commission on the Superior Services, those Indian gentlemen would have been thoroughly discredited. Lord Birken-

head perhaps does not mind the temporary disappointment of the Moderates, who are easy to satisfy. All that they want is a place on the Commission which it is not impossible to grant, but the granting of which will not stop the movement in India. That movement had to be dealt with. It had to be studied in confidence, in all its aspects by the governing class. This one consideration is responsible for the exclusion of Indians from the Commission and the exclusion of the Indian Legislative Committees from the hearing of evidence that might be given *in camera* to the British Commission. No affront, no insult, as the Prime Minister in all earnestness and sincerity said, was meant to India, but as the supremacy of Parliament and the overlordship of Great Britain had to be maintained, it was not possible to take Indians into confidence, in regard to essential matters connected with that single object.

After this exclusive study of the Indian problem, Lord Birkenhead will decide whether it will be prudent "to rally the Moderates" and thus dally with the situation or settle it, once for all, with the most powerful Party, namely the Indian National Congress. Though they have withheld co-operation from the Commission, because they do not like to be treated as schoolboys and their fitness for responsible Government elaborately examined by foreigners, they have nowhere stated that when invited either by the Viceroy or by the Secretary of State, they will not accept the invitation. But it is for Sir John Simon to recommend—and whether he recommends or not—for Lord Birkenhead who is the Cabinet, so far as India is concerned, to decide whether he should settle the Indian question as he settled the Irish question. His biographer tells us how

"Michael Collins, the Sinn Fein Leader, said, that during the negotiations, he was disarmed at every

point by 'the candour, magnanimity, patience and honesty of the Lord Chancellor!'"*

Mr. Lloyd George speaks highly of the Secretary of State for India in a cabled article to the *Montreal Daily Star* :

"His courage amounts to audacity. He is fearless. When he has made up his mind to take a certain course he will not be turned back by the resistance of friend or foe. He is loyal to his associates at all hazards. His brilliant career as Lord Chancellor marked him out as a man of real judgment. He was undoubtedly the greatest Lord Chancellor of his generation. But it is only those who have sat with him in Cabinets who know how wise he is in council."

Notwithstanding the repeated prayers of the Moderates, Independents and Nationalists, Lord Birkenhead's decision has been, it appears, swayed by the attitude of the only Party which is the nearest, if faintest, approach in India to the Sinn Fein, and which alone can "deliver the goods." If that Party is settled, all the trouble will be over in India, which will be helpful in the settlement of the troubles of the East. It is difficult to prophesy what Parliament will ultimately do. Will Lord Birkenhead be returned to power in the next General Election? Will Labour be in office? Even the return of Labour to office will not materially affect the Indian question. India is not a party question. "She is the milch-cow of all parties," says the Swarajist sarcastically.

It would be safe, therefore, alike for India and England to leave the future of the settlement in the hands of the Conservatives. The late Mr. Montagu had an idea of reviving the Liberal Party by taking up the question of Indian Home Rule even as Gladstone

* *Lord Birkenhead*, page 83. By "Ephesian."

took up Irish Home Rule. The British electorate is not antagonistic to India at all, though ill-informed people have circulated in India an idea that England is so "doped" that India could get no sympathy from her. England's only fault is that she is so busy otherwise that India is not a problem that interests her. If the question of India going out of the Empire is put before an English electorate, they will not stand it for a single moment. But if it is put to the British elector, whether India should be given Home Rule, to keep her as a happy and contented partner of the Empire, he will enthusiastically vote for that proposition.

With the passing away of Mr. Montagu Indian Home Rule as a Party question has ceased to exist. The Socialists dare not make Home Rule a Party matter lest they should be pilloried before the electorate as acting under instructions from Moscow and share a worse fate than the scandal of the Zinoviev letter. Therefore, the Socialists are not the Party in England who can deliver the goods, so far as India is concerned, though, as an Opposition, they can be of great service to India by using every opportunity of debate and interpellation. The Liberals will not go to the country with the cry of Indian Home Rule, because it cannot be a distinctive Party cry, as the Socialists will not oppose it. The Conservatives are not enamoured of making Home Rule a plank on their platform, even if they may not be afraid of granting it to a country which desires it or will have it, whether it deserves it or not, as the only price for staying within the Empire. The Conservatives are the real people that count in the matter of Indian settlement. Lord Birkenhead's policy has brought the Conservatives on the one side and the powerful Indian Radicals on the other, face to face. How his original brain will work in the affair is more than one can predict. But if he comes to the conclusion that the Reforms have not satisfied India and that they have proved a danger to British overlordship,

he will have the courage to withdraw the Reforms. If, on the other hand, he concludes that the withdrawal of the Reforms will prove even a greater menace, he will not take that perilous course. In his own words, he is not going to be a "niggardly bargainer." The aim will be, if one may presume, to extinguish the fire of agitation and discontent and not to keep the embers smouldering.

PART II
THE REFORMS AT WORK

“THE Indian Civil Service is more than a collection of individuals. It is a bureaucracy with a corporate life, a machine, a freemasonry. It moulds the raw recruit into its own image. It has to work as a whole. Many officers become wheels in a mechanism working by rule and regulation . . . the machine reduces its parts to mechanisms. . . . The machine of Government has become a thing apart, and by separating itself from the organic life of India, it has over-emphasized the fact that India is ruled by foreigners. . . . Secretariats become all-powerful; not a sparrow falls but is recorded, reported, and re-recorded, docketed, initialed and minuted; not a suggestion emanates from below but is regarded with suspicion or hostility as something of a foreign origin; not a thing is done without involving the whole machine in the doing of it. Then, it is the Government on one side and the people on the other. Such is both the mechanism and the psychology of the Service, and the one cannot be separated from the other. All this is unhealthy, is bad government, cannot last.”

RIGHT HONOURABLE J. RAMSAY MACDONALD
(Government of India).

PART II. THE REFORMS AT WORK

VOLUMES can be written on the Reforms at work. If Mr. Edwin Montagu were alive to-day he would have been happy to feel that he was destined to have the privilege of taking the initiative in the matter of disturbing deliberately the "placid, pathetic contentment of the masses" as he put it. Never more can it be said of the Indian masses :

"Though poor the peasant's cot, his feast though small,
He sees his little lot, the lot of all."

The Reforms, which enfranchised the tenants, have brought to them healthy discontent, a consciousness of their own importance in the life of the nation and a desire to assert it. There has been terrific awakening among the peasants, so much that the Seditious Meetings Act had to be applied to four districts of the United Provinces by the Governor-in-Council acting with his Ministers. This incidentally destroyed the Ministry ; one of the Ministers retired from public life and the other was defeated in the elections that came immediately after.

The peasants want to live a better life. They contrast their poverty with the plenty of the Zamindars. Consequently they return to the Legislatures only those who feel for them and work for them. Reforms have transferred to some extent the power from the old aristocracy and the landed proprietors to the peasants and rural classes. Widening of the electorates will result in the increase of the demand among India's working and peasant classes for a higher and a happier life. Even the Depressed Classes,

jammed between the peasant of the villages and the brutes of the wilderness, have arisen from the slumber of ages. A new India is rising on the ashes of Dyarchy !

To Lord Birkenhead's credit be it said that he was distrustful of the curious principle of Dyarchy, for whose introducing in India the Coalition Cabinet, by the way, must take the responsibility. On the subject then under consideration, Lord Birkenhead, one of the greatest constitutional lawyers of modern times and the greatest Lord Chancellor of our generation, as Mr. Lloyd George truly said, spoke as follows in the House of Lords :

“ I myself was always very distrustful of the dyarchical principle. It seems to me to savour of a kind of pedantic and hide-bound constitution, to which Anglo-Saxon communities have not generally responded, and which in my anticipation was unlikely to make a successful appeal to a community (the Indian) whose political ideals were so largely derived from Anglo-Saxon models.”

CHAPTER VII

DYARCHY

THE Morley-Minto Reforms took into consideration the Indian opinion which definitely favoured Council Government on the ground that it gave an opportunity for the representatives of the people to discuss and arrive at collective decisions. But these collective opinions were not binding on the administrations. Mr. Montagu introduced an element of responsibility in the provincial sphere to give the people some satisfaction. He divided the Government into two halves. Subjects which were essential for the carrying on of the administration were given to the old executive and unessential subjects transferred to the new one. The re-constitution of the Provincial Government gave some trouble to Mr. Montagu. Were there to be two separate executives and legislatures? The Transferred Subjects could be managed by ministers responsible to a Legislature drawn from an electorate with a very wide franchise. The Reserved Subjects could be administered by an executive consisting of the members of the Services who would be responsible to a more Conservative Legislature containing a large number of nominated and elected members drawn from safe and narrow constituencies, open only to men with "a stake in the country." The two halves would, of course, look up to the Governor as the common head of the dual administration. This dual arrangement would on the face of it prove a fruitful source of friction,

especially over the division of the finances. Therefore Lord Chelmsford and Mr. Montagu preferred what they imagined would be a better system of Dyarchy.

Under the Dyarchy which now prevails the Executive Government is divided into two halves. One half consists of the head of the provinces and an executive Council with European and Indian members. The other half of the Government consists of ministers, whose number is not fixed though generally two and sometimes three, chosen by the Governor from the elected members of the Legislature, who will be responsible for the administration of the transferred subjects. The Ministers are not members of the Governor's Executive Council though they are members of the Executive Government. They hold office during the life-time of the Legislature and are invariably re-appointed if re-elected. The Governor-in-Council manages the Reserved Subjects with which the Ministers have no concern. The Governor is also the final authority for the administration of the Transferred Subjects. According to the Constitution, the Transferred Subjects are those which are administered by the Governor who shall be guided by the advice of the Ministers, unless he sees sufficient cause to dissent from their opinion, in which case he may require action to be taken otherwise than in accordance with that advice.

Has Dyarchy worked? Is its abolition necessary? Should there be a return to the pre-reforms system of undiluted autocracy? Or should the Reforms be extended to the Provinces in full so as to endow them in their limited sphere with Parliamentary form and responsibility? The last question can be answered easily in the affirmative by the politicians, but my purpose here is not to canvass their predilections. I would rather purvey the opinions of the responsible Governments communicated to the Government of India to enable the Reforms Enquiry Committee of

1924 to form impartial conclusions based on the experience of various administrations.

It is in the Presidency of Madras that Dyarchy was worked for all that it was worth. The choice of ministers was made from the leader of the parties with the largest number in the Legislature. The Despatch of the Government of Madras, dated 16th July, 1923, shows that both halves of the Government invariably met together to discuss important questions. In 1921 and 1922, 46 Joint meetings of both sides of the Cabinet were held and 22 meetings in 1923 up to the end of June. Whereas the number of the exclusive Executive Council meetings for 1921, 1922 and 1923 were only 3, 2 and 2 respectively. The Government justly pride themselves on the fact that

“the arrangements under which practically all administrative questions are considered at Joint meetings of the Cabinet have been so far so successful in securing agreement that there are only four minutes of dissent on record.”

The opinion of the Madras Government therefore must be considered carefully in appraising the success or the failure of the Montagu experiment. In their second despatch, dated the 28th July, 1924, they refer to the financial difficulties which made it impossible to provide ministers with adequate funds.

“Had this been otherwise, it would have been possible to place ministers in funds for the benefit of the ‘Nation-building’ departments, and in proportion as visible results were shown, the reality of the transference of power and the possibilities of the new constitution as affording means of definite and real progress would have been more apparent.”

Now, the question arises, can adequate funds be raised with the support of the Ministers and the Legislatures by imposing new taxes? The councils, we are told, have adopted an attitude of “increasing unwilling-

ness" towards proposals for taxation, but these are attributed on the authority of the Ministers to the circumstance that the councils have no power over the reserved departments on which the revenue may be spent.

What, then, is the solution to the present state of things? A reply to this question is contained in para. 19 of the Government Despatch of 1924. Finding himself faced with difficulties, the Governor looked to his Ministers for advice. To quote the Government :

" They insist—and in this there is no doubt that they reflect the opinion of the majority of the Legislative council—that there should now be a complete transfer of all provincial subjects, though they are willing to allow some undefined safeguards in respect of the subjects of Finance and Law and Order. They claim this complete transfer both on the ground that nothing less will satisfy public opinion and on the ground that it is justified by the manner in which the Legislative Council has conducted itself in the past three years and by the state of the political education of the Presidency ; and in default they are not prepared to accept the transfer of only some or all of the minor subjects."

His Excellency the Governor-in-Council, however, would not contemplate, it would seem, the transfer of the general administration of the Land Revenue, of Law and Order including Jails, and last, but not least, of Finance. Subjects of " less magnitude " could be transferred with impunity but His Excellency would rather not discuss them for two reasons : first, he did not want to invite Ministerial troubles by discussing a standpoint different from their own, and secondly,

" the transfer of such Subjects cannot be expected to do anything to allay agitation." (The italics are mine.)

Special importance attaches to the verdict of the

opinion of the Government of the United Provinces, because of the part played in connection with the "Montford" reforms by its Governor, Sir William Marris which has been handsomely acknowledged by Mr. Edwin Montagu and Lord Chelmsford.*

"It is constantly alleged by their enemies and their critics," say the United Provinces Government in their letter to the Government of India, dated the 3rd of July, 1924, "that the reforms have failed. If by this it is meant that the present constitution has definitely broken, then, so far as these provinces are concerned, the statement must be emphatically denied."

The Reforms were launched in "circumstances of exceptional difficulty," such as "the declarations of the Allies in favour of self-determination," which "had aroused extravagant expectations," "the bitter resentment" excited by the Punjab disturbances "amongst all sections of the educated classes," the disturbance of Mahomedan feeling by the collapse of Turkey and the Treaty of Sévres, the high prices, and lastly the non-co-operation-cum-Khilafat agitation. The constitution successfully withstood this strain, thanks to "a growing sense among responsible people of the real menace of the situation." These "responsible people" had to incur a good deal of public obloquy and pay dearly at the next election when they were wiped out as with a sponge from the Legislatures of the land. Be that as it may, it is interesting to note that in the opinion of the Governor-in-Council, the reformed constitution has failed to satisfy the educated classes to appease whom the reforms were introduced, which fact constitutes in the former's opinion "the principal cause for anxiety."† The real cause for dissatisfaction

* Montagu-Chelmsford Report, para. 355.

† Reports of Local Government on the working of the Reformed Constitution, 1924. Pages 161 to 174.

arises from the defects and difficulties inherent in the constitution itself. These defects and difficulties are the inevitable outcome of Dyarchy, which is not an accidental feature but the very essence of the policy deliberately embodied in the Act :

“Dyarchy,” as picturesquely put by the United Provinces Government, “is obviously a cumbrous, complex, confused system, having no logical basis, rooted in compromise, and defensible only as a transitional expedient.”

The Governor-in-Council has frankly admitted that :

“the difficulties and defects inherent in the scheme are quite incurable by any mere alteration of the Act or rules. The utmost that changes so restricted could do would be to oil the wheels of the constitutional machinery. They could have no effect on the general and permanent tendencies of the constitution itself.”

The Governor-in-Council is convinced that :

“there is no half-way house between the present and a new constitution.”

What is really very significant, he is clear :

“that concessions which fall short of complete provincial autonomy will placate no section of the opponents of the existing system ; that they will secure neither stability nor contentment ; and that they will lower the efficiency, already impaired, of the administration ”*

The Government of Bombay gave expression to their feeling about this half-and-half arrangement in their letter to the Government of India dated the 2nd July, 1924 :

* Para. 20 of the United Provinces Government's Despatch.

"It is obvious," they observed, "that a stable system of Parliamentary Government cannot rest upon unstable foundations."

The position of the irremovable Executive was as anomalous as that of the precarious Ministry. The former lacked an assured support of a majority in the House whereas the latter were without an organised following. The only party that flourished on this unworkable system was the one that declined to work it.

"The Swarajists," wrote the Bombay Government, "are the only non-official party in the House united by bonds other than communal. They have a recognised leader, a definite programme, organisation and discipline. The party is the strongest in the Legislative Council but does not command a majority."

If, however, it had chosen to unite its forces with the Government, the position of the Ministers and the Executive would have become impregnable. But the party was pledged not to accept office and work Dyarchy because it was admittedly unworkable! Had only this "powerful and organised party" not been pledged to "a policy of refusal of political responsibility" the Government of Bombay had no doubt that "its numerical superiority to every other group and party in the House would certainly entitle it to office and the first step towards true Parliamentary Government would become possible. As it persists in remaining in opposition, the Ministers have necessarily been selected from the smaller groups. This is the first and most important cause of the weakness of the position of Ministers. These smaller groups are not only numerically inferior but are deficient in organisation."

The question will naturally be put why a party which neither lacked parliamentary ability nor efficiency behaved in the most unparliamentary manner and declined office even though the electorate had returned it in such large numbers. These Legislatures were no parliaments in the true sense of the term, the Swarajists felt, and they sought election on the distinct understanding that they would expose the mockery of the reforms by declining to accept office which carried with it no real power. Whenever the Government twitted the Swarajists on their unparliamentary non-acceptance of office, the Swarajists returned the compliment by asking where in the world was a parliament in which the opposition alone was elected while on the Treasury benches sat permanent members of the Services, nominated by the Governor, with no constituency except the Government House and no general election to face? When the present system with its nominated members and irresponsible executive is removed lock, stock and barrel, the time will come when the self-respecting people in the land will feel it an honour to accept office. True Cabinet responsibility must, of course, be undivided, because it is indivisible. A Government cannot display the cloven hoof of dyarchical irresponsibility and incompatibility of temperaments and functions. It must be a united whole. If responsibility in this sense is introduced, the Swarajists will not persist in what looks like an uncompromising policy. Many of them are men with a constructive head and they are not happy in their present destructive rôle. But the moment they choose to acquiesce in the present anomaly, the public, who are unbending and have decided views in the matter, will not return them to the Legislature even as the Moderates and Liberals were not returned, notwithstanding the fact that they were able and well-to-do men with a long standing in public life. If the public are to be conciliated, Dyarchy

must be scrapped and complete responsibility introduced in the Provinces.

The Bombay Government have expressed a decided view that some definite declaration of a stable policy which would endure for some years to come is essential. But can there be a continuity of sound policy so long as the present unsound and undemocratic system continues? The Government themselves feel :

“ That the task of suggesting proposals for the better working of the Act would have been far easier had there been an opportunity of judging the real working of the Act as intended by those responsible for framing it. But the fact that the Act has not been worked as intended is not due to any act of the Government but due in large degree to the determination of that section of Indian politicians which in the first instance refused to enter the Council and which having entered refused to take on their shoulders the responsibilities of opposition.”

The determination of these politicians will no doubt stiffen and their hands will be strengthened by the addition of the Moderates to their ranks, if what the latter demand is denied.

What do the Bombay Moderates who have worked the administration, unsatisfactory as it is, want? The answer to this question is contained in the Minute of Dissent dated 8th April, 1924, of two distinguished Indian Members of the Bombay Government, the Hon. C. V. Mehta, Revenue Member, and the Hon. Cowasji Jehangir, General Member of the Bombay Governor's Executive Council. In their dissenting minute to the Government of Bombay's dispatch to the Government of India, dated 2nd July, 1924, they say :

“ All the organised parties in the country, Liberals,

Independents, Swarajists and No-changers* are unanimous in their demand for self-government. The Muslims assembled this year in the Muslim League at Lahore, a place of acute tension between the two communities, expressed their concurrence with the rest of the country. The non-Brahmins in a recent conference at Belgaum demanded a Royal Commission. Whatever success the Swarajists may have gained at the last elections is a faithful reflection of this widespread belief. In the circumstances detailed above, with a strong party in the Council bent on opposing, and if necessary, obstructing Government, the partial transfer of further responsibility by the successive transfer of departments to Ministers would only lead to more effective opportunities for a deadlock. We are of opinion that no palliatives will be of any effect and that the creation of an authority to control the Government in the shape of a responsible elected Council to take the place of the control exercised by the Secretary of State and ultimately Parliament can only be achieved by full responsibility in the Provinces."

The tragedy of the Reforms was enacted in Bengal, the only province in India where public opinion has developed even to the point of offering violent resistance to the Government. The story of the Reforms in Bengal is a sad one. Lord Lytton, the Governor, was animated by the best feelings when he sailed for India. He had fully imbibed the spirit of Mr. Montagu and the Reforms.

Mr. Montagu was perfectly aware of the difficulties inherent in Dyarchy. He also knew that difficulties never looked so formidable except when one allowed them to fill the mind. To face the difficulties manfully is the only way to overcome them.

* Another name for Gandhi-ites who would not change their faith in passive resistance and mass action as opposed to Legislative Action.

"If reserved subjects," said Mr. Montagu,* "are to become transferred subjects one day, it is absolutely essential that during the transitional period, although there is no direct responsibility for them, there should be opportunities of influence and consultation. Therefore, although it seems necessary to separate the responsibility there ought to be every room that you can possibly have for consultation and joint deliberation on the same policy, and for acting together for the purpose of consultation and deliberation, as the Bill provided, in one Government."

Bengal, like Madras, did not adhere literally to the system of Dyarchy. The Government of Bengal accepted the spirit of Mr. Montagu, which was also embodied in the recommendations of the Joint Select Committee of Parliament. In Bengal the two halves of the Government worked in union. To combat Dyarchy under such perfect working was a task which Hercules would have hesitated to perform. That task was undertaken by Deshabhandu Chittaranjan Das and accomplished with the help of the minority. Lord Ronaldshay once referred to Das as a man of great intellectual powers whom Providence had richly endowed.† Lord Olivier gave, during his life-time, a noble and well-deserved tribute which the enemies and detractors of Das gave only after his death. In the words of Lord Olivier, Das was

"a particularly upright and scrupulous politician, second only to Gandhi himself in saintliness of character. He is unquestionably a man of high and

* Speech on the motion for the second reading of the Government of India Bill in Parliament, 5th June, 1919.

† Lord Ronaldshay's speech at St. Andrew's Day Celebration, Calcutta.

admirable ideals on behalf of his country which he has fairly and uncompromisingly expressed.”*

In the first period of the Reforms, Das had stood away from the Councils. Though he was himself opposed to this policy of non-co-operationist abstention on which Dyarchy and the reactionaries would thrive, there were many sacrifices that a man had to make in public life. The sacrifice of one's own conviction before the collective decision of a great organisation to which one has the honour to belong is the greatest of sacrifices. Das bowed to the verdict of the Congress, though he had fought Gandhi's programme of boycotting the Councils before judgment was given in Gandhi's favour,† if only by a small majority. Das knew that he had a moral right to form a Party of his own to carry on a campaign in the country, to convert the minority into a majority. But the game was not worth the candle. The elections had come and gone. The capture of the Councils was a live issue before the General Elections. It would be like beating a dead horse for another three years, too long a period for so trifling a campaign. Moreover, Das felt that in a nation's struggle for freedom, the ethics of party politics in free countries are sometimes a sin in a subject nation. A subject nation has no politics; but, if it chooses to have politics, it is nothing short of organising the forces to throw off the yoke. Das recognised therefore only two parties, the foreign Government on the one side, and the People on the other.

He was not prepared without sufficient provocation to establish a third party. The Swaraj Party, however, came into existence when the Gandhi Party was played out. While the latter was unfit to follow its

* House of Lords, 21st July, 1924.

† Special session of the Congress at Calcutta in 1920.

Master's programme, because it did not hear his inspiring voice from day to day, hushed behind the stone walls, strangely enough it was also reluctant to let anybody else follow a policy different from the one which the Master had expounded. Das, however, had no use for these do-nothings. He revived his old programme of capturing "every fort of the Bureaucracy." His programme caused widespread alarm. With the avowed object of bringing Government through Legislature to a standstill, Das called on every Congressman to seek election.

"This sabotage is even more difficult to deal with than open rebellion," wrote a high authority.*

"If he thought he could lead it to success, he would join the revolutionary party tomorrow," cabled the Calcutta correspondent of the *Times*† reporting a speech of Mr. Das delivered at a meeting of the Calcutta Corporation of which he was the Mayor, "but he believed it would not succeed, therefore he would not join it."

"Das's policy of Council-entry, though high-sounding, was only Parliamentary Action," complained the Direct Actionists, but his personality was irresistible. The Congress was unwilling to help him, because it had no faith in freedom coming through Legislatures set up by foreigners to consolidate their power. The Congress would take no notice of the Legislatures. It would rather call on the country to treat them with contemptuous disdain. It felt that with the entry of Congressmen into the Legislatures, the power of the Congress would be diminished between the doings in the legislatures and the sayings in the Congress. Far-sighted officials at the Central Government welcomed the transfer of the storm-centre from the Congress

* Sir Michael O'Dwyer in *India as I knew it*, page 402.

† The *Times* dated 21st November, 1924.

and its unthinking crowds subject to outbursts of racial frenzy to the calm and serene atmosphere of the Legislatures and the treasury benches on which sat the strong, silent men. But the provincial governments did not consider the Swarajist change of tactics as an unmixed good. Though they knew the revolutionary ferment outside the Legislatures would diminish, they were not sure of the effect of the repercussion of the Swarajist's wrecking programme within. However, they lived in the hope that those who came to scoff might remain to pray.

In the Bengal Provincial Council, Swarajism became intransigent and infectious. The Swarajists were only a small minority, but the personality of Das drew to his side the Independents. The combined party commanded only 60 votes in a house of 140. But the personality of Das influenced some nondescripts who were afraid to vote with him but were willing to absent themselves. They also serve who do not vote, said Mr. Das. To attend the meetings and remain neutral in the presence of the Government members was asking for too much of a Bengalee of the weaker variety. Either the Bengalee is strong and defiant or he is so hesitating and timid that to call him effeminate would be to insult womankind. This sort of material could be easily manipulated by Das. On a wider scale, his followers have always felt that a handful of brave, honest and energetic young men could bring about the regeneration of Bengal and through Bengal of India. Das and his faithful followers could easily upset the little apple cart of the bureaucrat.

"They have succeeded in inflicting a series of defeats on the Government," wrote the Bengal Government,* "though usually by a very narrow

* Bengal Government's letter to Government of India dated 21st July, 1924, para. 8.

margin. Their most striking achievement has been the refusal of the minister's salaries."

Government had hoped that better times would come, but so long as Das was alive no Ministry could exist—Dyarchy had to be suspended.

The great son of Bengal and India passed away in the meridian of his power and glory. After him, the deluge. The Swaraj party lacks leadership to-day in Bengal and India as a whole. The man with a clear vision and a stout heart is no longer in the field to inspire his workers. Gandhi has no faith in the councils at all and therefore he has no interest in the work of the Swarajists. Mr. Nehru, who is decidedly the leading figure in the Legislatures, has too constructive and practical a mind to inspire or guide the destructive inclinations of his followers. Lipping the language of his chief, he has been planning obstruction and preaching independence, but any one can see that Mr. Nehru is only marking time. If only the Simon Commission decide to introduce autonomy in the province—even though an autocracy may continue at Simla especially in regard to Army, Foreign Affairs and Indian States—it is safe to predict that many Swarajists will throw their weight against any further policy of non-co-operation or non-acceptance of office. If the Simon Commission fulfill the expectations of the Moderates in regard to provincial autonomy and partial responsibility at the Central Government, even Pundit Motilal Nehru will throw off his mask and openly advocate co-operation. With him a large number of Swarajists who are only waiting for something tangible to work will cut adrift from the Congress and its extreme idealism.

If, however, the Simon Commission do not have the courage to meet the wishes of loyal people in the region of the Provinces, obstruction will receive a new lease of life.

"The majority of the educated classes in Bengal, or at any rate the most vocal portion of them," observe the Bengal Government, "desire provincial autonomy as early as possible and the difference between the two sections is merely as to the best means of attaining that end, whether by working the transitional constitution or by wrecking it. The Swarajists, as a branch of the non-co-operation party, are fully prepared to use such weapons as social boycott and are not above resorting to methods of terrorism, while the more cautious section of the educated classes stand to incur unpopularity if they even appear to support Government."

The memorandum of the Punjab Government* on the working of the reforms is interesting reading. The new council has a sprinkle of the "Swarajists," an element unknown to the old, but, unlike other Provinces in the Punjab, they are not purely national in outlook and ideas, they have a communal bent and inclination. The parties in the Legislature are more communal than political. The Hindus are only a minority of the population and have not been enthusiastic about the Reforms.

The late Sir Ganga Ram, the premier Hindu aristocrat of the Punjab who had loosened his purse-strings in every noble cause, especially the amelioration of the condition of the Hindu widows, told the present writer that he would be really happy if the reforms were withdrawn. The statement was made in the presence of Lala Lajpat Rai, the Congress leader of the Province, in the dining saloon of the ss. Rawalpindi. The Congress leader, also a Punjabee, shook his head violently, but even he is not free from prejudice as to the manner in which the reforms in the Punjab have been worked.

* Reports of the Local Government on the working of the Reformed Constitution, 1924, pages 193 to 208.

There is no enthusiasm in the Punjab, it would appear from the report of the Punjab Government, for Dyarchy, not in the Swarajist sense that so little power has been transferred that it only depresses the zealot, but in the opposite sense that enough has been handed over to the people who have not shown any competence to approach things in an impartial manner. This is an indictment which may seem harsh but the responsibility for it must rest on the shoulders of those who have been courting the communal banshee.

The observations of Sir Malcolm Hailey's Government may be positively distasteful to the enthusiasts of further reforms, but that they contain much truth cannot be easily denied :

" We are, in the Punjab, faced in this connection with another and very practical consideration. To judge by the attitude of the Press, which is largely in Hindu control, there is so little effective demand for further transfers as to create a suspicion that there would be some gratification if certain subjects now transferred were to pass over to the reserved side. If this expresses the situation too nakedly, it is at all events the case that constant efforts are made to persuade the Governor to control the actions of the Ministry in order to safeguard the communal interests of the minority in the Council. It would be a somewhat crude, but nevertheless an effective test of the feeling of those whose political theories demand a continuing transfer of administration to Ministers, if we were now to put forward a practical proposal to transfer the Administration of Justice (item 17), Police (item 32) or Elections (item 44) to the transferred schedule. It is even doubtful if much honest support would be found for the transfer of Land Revenue Administration (item 8) with its opportunities for the appointment and control of a numerous revenue staff and for securing

political influence by the allotment of colony lands. From the point of view of the Executive Government, it is at the moment impossible to advise the transfer to Ministers of any of the major subjects now reserved. Apart from any consideration based on the necessity of maintaining a fixed policy and the guarantee of a strong control in a province such as the Punjab, it is clearly essential to delay further action until the competitive rivalry of the communities has abated."

There are many who will agree with the last sentence in the above quotation. The Punjab has advertised itself in the reform-era as a communal province whose Ministers have been swayed by racial considerations and thus proclaimed its own unworthiness for further reforms. If the Punjab does not want to be left far behind other provinces in the race for reforms, those who have let loose the communal hounds of Bellona must cry halt, turn over a new leaf and vow unto themselves never more to repeat the blunder of installing communalism on the Gadi of administration. A people deserves the Government it gets. In the case of the Punjab this saying appears to be particularly true.

The Government of Bihar and Orissa* discuss in their letter to the Government of India (Para. 24) whether public opinion will be satisfied with the enlargement of the sphere of the transferred departments and the reduction of that of the reserved ones, the extension of the influence and power of the Ministers and the reduction in corresponding ratio of the power of the Executive Council, and the increase of the membership of the Ministry to three and the reduction of the membership of the Executive to one.

The Governor-in-Council unhesitatingly rejected the above consideration on the ground that it was neither

* Letter to Government of India, dated 7th July, 1924.

a workable administrative proposition nor was it calculated to satisfy public opinion.

It will be useful to record the opinion in Bihar and Orissa as ascertained by the Government of that province :

“ The net result of the scrutiny of the replies received by the local government is that there is very little that can be done to smooth the working of dyarchy or to eliminate the different administrative imperfections. Whatever defects exist are inherent in the system itself, and this raises the main point which is the keynote of the whole discussion. Assuming that a further step in advance is contemplated, on what grounds is this step going to be taken ? In order to make dyarchy more workable ? It is workable now, though creakily. The few minor remedies suggested above may cure a creak or two, but they will affect the larger questions in no degree whatever. The real issue is—are we going to pacify at all costs our clamant critics ? If this is the object to be sought, not one of the few minor remedies suggested above will influence them one jot or tittle. They will be satisfied with nothing but the disappearance of dyarchy, and in its place the substitution of what is popularly known as provincial autonomy. That, as already emphasised, is the real issue which has to be faced.”

Let me record briefly the opinion of the remaining comparatively smaller Governments of Burma, Assam and the Central Provinces. The Government of Burma are diffident about expressing an opinion, because the reforms were introduced in Burma two years after their introduction in other Provinces. In the eighteen months in which the Reforms have been in operation they could hardly discover any defects, which might partly be due to the extreme opponents of dyarchy boycotting the Legislature in whose

capacity for doing real public good they had candidly no confidence.

The Government of Assam confess that there is no love lost between the Council and the Ministers:

“The acceptance of office by the Ministers and the indication of a genuine attempt on their part to work the existing constitution are sufficient to alienate from them the goodwill of the Council as a whole and to deprive them of the influence which they exercised as private members.”

In other words, the unpopularity of the system of Dyarchy is visited on its allies. The difficulty in the province of Assam seems to be the same as elsewhere:

“Most of those who at present have the greatest influence in moulding public opinion refuse to take advantage of the opportunities given to them for closer contact and better understanding and declare their intention of maintaining their attitude until their demands are satisfied in full.”*

The difficulty of the position is aggravated by the fact that the Swaraj party in Assam, as elsewhere, is:

“part of the All-India Swarajist organisation and draws its inspiration from leaders with an All-India reputation and influence. These leaders have made it clear in the Assembly and elsewhere that their object is clearly the establishment of Dominion Home Rule for India as a whole.”

The leader of Assam, Mr. Phukhan, born in an aristocratic family and educated in Europe, was one of the principal lieutenants of C. R. Das, who bore for him a brother's affection and reposed in him implicit confidence. The spirit of Mr. Phukhan animates the Province in which he lives, and that spirit found

* Assam Government's letter to the Government of India, dated 1st July, 1924.

frequent expression in the Assembly, of which Mr. Phukhan is a silent but forceful personality.

The Government of the Central Provinces had to face the full blast of Swarajism in the Legislature. Having captured a majority of the seats, the Swarajists declined to accept responsibility. Thus Dyarchy was destroyed in the Central Provinces, but the process of destruction recoiled on the Swarajists themselves. The Swarajists were committed to "a policy of uniform, continuous and consistent obstruction with a view to make Government through the Council impossible." According to this policy, they would accept no office in the gift of the Government with or without salary or other remuneration. Further they were committed to the opposition of all demands for grants in the Council excepting, of course, those which they could not object to for special reasons, on which they abstained from voting. This policy was pursued to its death. It broke the Swaraj party in the Central Provinces into two wings, Responsivists and Congressists, the former accepting office after a General Election. Even those who have accepted office hold that Dyarchy is a failure and must go.

The position of the Central Provinces Government has been a difficult one :

"When both parties attack the Government, the Moderates with a view to progress along constitutional lines and the Extremists with a view to bringing the Reform Government to a standstill," complains the Governor-in-Council, "the case for the Government is never placed before the electorate and cannot be placed before it during an election, *so long as the Government Servants' Conduct Rules remain in force.*"* (The italics are mine.)

It would be more correct to say, so long as the Government members are not elected as in all self-governing

* Para. 3 in Letter to the Government of India, dated 7th July.

countries : No tampering with Government Servants' Conduct Rules will really remedy the evil. Members of the permanent services have, all the world over, no party or politics. Beyond their title to exercise their votes as private citizens, so long as they are in service, they cannot take sides in an active campaign, especially in an election fight. The Government Servants' Conduct Rules in this respect is a salutary one. It is not a modification of this rule that is wanted but strict adherence to it. "It is impossible for the Government"—I agree with the Governor-in-Council, Central Provinces—"to obtain a fair hearing and this appears to be a real weakness of the Reform Scheme, for which it is most difficult to devise a suitable remedy"—so long as Dyarchy continues. But the moment complete responsibility and the parliamentary form are introduced in the Provinces, the party system which exists to-day will re-shape itself under the hammer of new ideals and opportunities. The Governor-in-Council will then cease to be—the Governor himself will become a social, instead of a political head; power will rest with the Legislature, to whom the Cabinet would be responsible. When the public feel that they can make and unmake a cabinet, they will be conscious of their power. Until this power is granted, they will continue to indulge in reckless and irresponsible agitation. Responsibility begets responsibility.

We have in the reports of various provincial Governments accumulated evidence of the heavy strain under which Dyarchy has been working. In their unwillingness to part with power, it may be natural for some Governments to plead the continuance of the present state until the actual crisis comes. It would be certainly unnatural to expect a Government to write its own epitaph.

CHAPTER VIII

THE MINISTERS' CONFESSIONS

THE Congress had from first to last non-co-operated with the Reforms in one form or another. In the first three years of the working of the Reformed Legislatures, the Congress people not only abstained from standing as candidates but appealed to the electorate not to exercise their right of franchise. The electorate even in more advanced countries has to be coaxed and cajoled by the candidates. The voters in India who have not taken kindly to the sham reforms did not require much persuasion not to go to the polling booths. The non-co-operator, therefore, easily succeeded in preventing a large part of the electorate from taking an active part in the Reforms.

This negative policy of Mahatma Gandhi, a disciple of Tolstoy, succeeded during the first general election under the new Reforms, but its very success emphasised to a militant section of his own party its futility and failure. The so-called reactionaries had an easy walk over during the elections. They could always count on their friends and supporters to go to the polls. The Moderates who had seceded from the Congress could also find an easy place in the Legislatures and work the reforms in which they had abiding faith. The Council and the Assembly loyally supported the Government in combatting the non-co-operation movement. When the Government wanted to resort to repressive measures, the Ministers and the Councils gave them every help. Though a big gale was blowing

over the land, the Government and the Reformed Legislatures worked unmoved and unperturbed in a spirit of harmonious co-operation.

The most difficult and independent Ministry was in the United Provinces, where two first class politicians, firebrands of the Home Rule period, had taken office. Even there the Governor, then Sir Harcourt Butler, had no difficulty in securing the support of the Ministry to put down a movement which was "as bad as it was mad." Non-co-operation had disturbed the placid pathetic contentment of the peasants of Oudh. The Ministers gladly gave their support to put down the peasant rising in four principal districts which were the storm centres. The Reforms could not have had a better chance in the best of circumstances. The Congress, which had declared its object of reducing the Reforms to a mockery, was shocked to find that the Legislatures threw on the boycott.

The advent of the Congress people into the Legislatures with the avowed object of paralysing Dyarchy made the working of the Reforms much more difficult. In Bengal, they had made the position of the Ministers ludicrous. They worked for some months, but the Council did not vote their salaries. When, despite the sanction of the Council, the Ministers continued in office, the Swarajists moved the High Court to secure the issue of a "mandamus" to prevent the submission of a motion for the reconsideration by the Council of its decision rejecting the salaries of Ministers. A suit was successfully instituted and an injunction was issued by the High Court fettering the powers of the President of the Legislative Council in regard to the business which he might allow to come before the council.

One of the Ministers, Mr. A. K. Fazal-ul-Huq, was an old Congressman. At a Delhi meeting of the Congress, he stole the thunders of a younger man who wanted to move an amendment to the Montagu Reforms, rejecting them *in toto* because India aspired

to nothing short of driving the English out. The position of the young man was that the Reforms were cutting off the coals which fed the forward movement. Mr. Huq came forward and gave a speech, anticipating by ten years the Madras Congress which declared Independence as its goal. A fascinating man of parts, an emotional patriot (the Bengalee type), a Muslim in whom there was once no communalism, Mr. Huq, in a voice which shook with feeling, said that India wanted to stand upon her own legs, free and independent as England, the illustrious mistress of Asia.

Since then, I have not met or heard this remarkable gentleman. But he has not been one of those lazy politicians who do not see changing things in a changed perspective. Change is the essence of politics. "The old order changeth, yielding place to new," even in the East, where things move slowly! The Reforms and their working in Bengal had made Mr. Huq "a wiser and a sadder man." He was for a policy of extreme caution. He would even vote with the *Morning Post* for the withdrawal of Reforms.*

Confession is good to the soul. Mr. Huq began his comments on the existing constitution "by making a confession," as he put it :

"My experience of the last few years of the political developments in India," he wrote, "has convinced me that the declaration of the Imperial Government in Parliament was a great mistake. Representative institutions have been thrust upon India, although there can be no doubt that representative institutions as they are known in the West, are utterly unsuited to Indian conditions."

Mr. Huq's pessimism reminds one of Lord Curzon's phrase about the vintage of Liberalism being poured into "the archaic bottles of Indian traditions and

* Note on the Government of India, dated the 8th April, 1924.

prejudice." In Mr. Huq's opinion, "the first essential for these institutions (of democracy) to flourish and grow is to have an atmosphere free from party strife!" As the new wine of democracy had stimulated parties and strife, let there be no democracy, exclaimed Mr. Huq, who would hug Oriental ideas of kingship. Mr. Huq's critics—the ultra-democrats of the Congress and the revolutionaries of an extremer school—were amused at the exhibition of nervousness by a Minister who had held brave ideals at one time. Mr. Huq persisted: "the Oriental is accustomed to strong personal rule of one man." Mr. Huq's experience of the impersonal rule of many men was unfortunate came the satirical retort. But was it really the voice of the many that prevailed? The personality of one man, Mr. C. R. Das, was ruling the politics and the parties of the Congress. It was the Orient over again.

One man rule, however, is hardly an Eastern monopoly. History does not speak of two Napoleon Bonapartes; it speaks only of one Oliver Cromwell, one Alexander, one outstanding Kaiser, one Lenin, one Christ, one Budha, one Mazzini and one Mussolini, though the last is still with us and not in the realm of history. One man rule, the domination of one powerful personality, the dictation of one domineering will, the leadership of one in a thousand—all these follow the law of nature. The fittest persons must lead, so long as they are fit. Fitter men elbow them out and take their place. Old idols are broken and new ones installed. Democracy loves the tumult and not the depth of the soul.

Mr. Huq could not stand the new-fangled democracy. Lest his voice should be taken to be representative of his community, Sir Abdur Rahim, member of the Governor's Council, rushed to the "picture" with a different colour:*

* Note on the Government of India; Letter by Sir Abdur Rahim, dated the 19th July, 1924.

"We are not to deviate," said he, "from the goal set out in that Act, namely the establishment by gradual steps of responsible Government in India with full Dominion Status, as lately announced by the Secretary of State for India. I venture also to assert that any step of a retrograde or reactionary tendency would be in direct opposition to unanimous Indian opinion and gravely intensify political difficulties. There could be no doubt that the demand of Indian opinion, as voiced by many of the influential, thoughtful, and responsible exponents of such opinion, is for the immediate grant of an entirely autonomous and responsible Government in the provinces and a considerable introduction of responsibility in the Central Government."

But what of the Swarajists and their obstruction? There was no love lost between Sir Abdur Rahim and the Swarajists, but

"the sole object of this party," he said, "was to obstruct the Government with a view to force the British Parliament to grant immediate Swaraj. This political party has captured the Calcutta Corporation and several District Boards and Mufussil municipalities. What will be the fate of this particular party in the near future is difficult to tell, but we must reckon upon the possibility of there being always a party in the Council which would be impatient of the pace by which the British Parliament may regulate the development of responsible government in India, and might even adopt measures of wholesale obstruction in order to achieve their object."

The confessions of Sir P. C. Mitter, a colleague of Sir Surendranath Banerji, is pathetic reading:

"I condemn Dyarchy," he wrote,* "although I

* Note dated 16th June, 1924, on the Government of India Letter, dated April 8th, 1924.

claim that Bengal was one of the few Provinces in India where during the last administration Dyarchy was worked fairly successfully in spite of great difficulties."

Sir P. C. Mitter truly says the Liberal party in Bengal was fairly strong and organised during the years 1917 to 1921, with a strong backing from a large majority of the members of the Legislative Council.

"We tried our best to work Dyarchy peacefully, and I claim we succeeded in working it as satisfactorily as it was possible to work it. But one result of this determined effort on our part was that the majority of our followers in the Legislative Council could not get re-elected and the leader of our party, Sir Surendranath Banerji, and a staunch supporter of our party, Mr. S. R. Das,* could not get re-elected. The party tried to work Dyarchy loyally but Dyarchy killed our party. In my opinion the difficulties of running Dyarchy will increase more and more in future."

From the confessions of the Ministers of the Bengal Government, let us turn to another Presidency, where also Dyarchy was worked in the high spirit of loyalty and devotion.

One has only to go through the memorandum of Reforms prepared by Mr. (now Sir) A. P. Patro, dated 12th June, 1924, to understand the woes of the ministers in one of the most educationally advanced Provinces of India where Dyarchy is supposed to have worked in the grandest style conceivable. Sir A. P. Patro, who was Minister for Education and Public Works, has recorded his views with considerable moderation and responsibility attaching to his position.

Strange as it may seem, the Governor exercises more control over the Ministers than the Legislature

* To-day, the Law Member of the Government of India.

to whom they are supposed to be responsible for what are known as "transferred subjects," subjects transferred from the control of the old bureaucracy to the new democracy which the Reforms have called into being.

"One of the serious anomalies in the scheme of the Reforms," says the Madras Minister, "is that the Governor of the Province is made more absolute in the administration of the transferred subjects, though the Joint Report and the Committee on Functions intended otherwise. Under the provisions of Section 52, the Governor is held to be in charge of the departments of administration transferred to the Ministers. The Ministers hold office during his pleasure. He overrules them when he dissents from them, even though they may be backed by the Legislature."

The Minister must resign not when the Legislature disagrees with him but when he disagrees with the Governor!

"He may even be dismissed by the Governor," says our Madras Minister, "if he refused to accept the Governor's opinion. And yet it is expected that the Minister is responsible to the Legislative Council to carry out its policy."

So far as the Executive Council, which is responsible for the reserved half of the administration, is concerned, the Governor is bound by the opinion of the majority of those present except in relation to measures affecting the safety and tranquillity of the Provinces.

"The Act ought to provide for the independence of the Ministers," says the Madras Minister, "that the Governor acting with the Ministers should decide any question by a majority. The Legislative Council and the country expect the Ministers to

work out plans of progress regarding which recommendations may be made by the Legislative Councils."

The Ministers in reality are in office, however large their majority in the House, but not in power. Such a ministry cannot work. The Legislature under these conditions cannot develop a responsible Opposition. Parliamentary Opposition criticises every Government measure in a constructive spirit, suggesting an alternative scheme which it would carry out when returned to power. But such power is wholly denied even in the limited field of transferred subjects, which are directly ruled by the Governor with an iron hand.

So far as the reserved subjects are concerned, let the Madras Minister explain why the Opposition is futile :

"The criticism can only consist in giving advice and making recommendations. Government may be defeated, but Executive Councillors need not concern themselves over the defeat nor need the recommendations be given effect to. The sense of powerlessness over the reserved subjects leads to a sense of irritation and despair."

What is the remedy? The answer is contained in the note of the Muslim Home Member of the United Provinces, the Maharaja of Mahmudabad :*

"Dyarchy should go and the Government in future should consist of Ministers only. All departments should be transferred with the exception of the Political Department, which may be left in the hands of the Governor himself with power to entrust to any member of his Cabinet."

This opinion of the Home Member is also shared by the Ministers of the United Provinces Government :

* Reports of the Local Government on the working of the Reformed constitution, 1924 (pages 175 to 186).

“Dyarchy should be brought to an end and full provincial autonomy conceded.”*

In the Punjab, alike in the opinion of the Hindu Minister Mr. Lal Chand and the Mahomedan Minister Sir Fazl-i-Husain, the distinction between reserved and transferred subjects should be done away with. But the Punjab Ministers will do well to digest the remarkably candid statement of the Governor-in-Council regarding the communal jealousies and other petty feelings on which the place-hunters have been thriving.

Communalism has condemned the Punjab, in the eye of the Government, as unfit for advance towards Provincial autonomy. It is, perhaps, the consciousness of this fact that has made the Punjabees show much loyalty and respect to the British Parliamentary Commission. They, perhaps, hope that Sir John Simon will copy in the Punjab the example of Lord Durham in regard to Canada.† Lord Durham found Canada exactly in the same plight as Sir John Simon must have found the Punjab. The English and the French Canadians were as much divided as the Hindus and the Muslims of the Punjab :

“The English looked on the French with contempt,”‡ even as the Punjab Muslim looked on the Hindus. “Inter-marriages were rare in Canada”—there are no inter-marriages in the Punjab—“There was no combination for public objects of any kind, not even for those of charity.” Things must have seemed equally bad to Sir John in the Punjab. “The only public occasion,” wrote Lord Durham, “on which they ever meet is in the jury-box and they meet there only to utter obstruction of Justice”—matters may not have gone quite this length in the Punjab—though it

* Ibid., page 181.

† Lord Durham's Report was laid before Parliament in January, 1839.

‡ *The Broad Stone of Empire*, Vol I, page 99. By Sir Charles Bruce.

is ominous they have begun to criticise judges and judgments from the communal point of view. "The English were irritated by the obstacles to the improvement of trade and commerce which were placed in their way by French jealousy; the French were irritated by the political and economic ascendancy of a minority." In the Punjab the Muslims are irritated by the economic ascendancy of the Hindus, to whom particular objection was taken by some Muslim legislators on the question that the Hindus were moneylenders while Islam prohibited moneylending. So does Islam prohibit drinking, though some of the choicest of wines are drunk in Persia and Urdu-speaking Asia.

However that may be, Lord Durham thought the only way to kill the racial animosities in Canada, which were a disgrace to civilisation, was to invest the Canadian administration with power and responsibility. The cat and dog policy of the Muslims and the Hindus in the Punjab, which has besmirched the fair fame of India, will perhaps change when the cats and dogs are brought together under the same roof of administration and taught a sense of responsibility to a common master, namely, the electorate, who have something better to do than applaud a quarrel.

"Another and a shorter way of stopping their ugly quarrels is," according to the honest O'Dwyer school, "to withdraw the benefit of Reforms from those Provinces where communalism is rampant."

Mealy-mouthed Punjab will have to use its rare gifts for prayers and petitions before it makes the Simon Commission see affairs in the Punjab through the spectacles which Lord Durham wore in Canada in another century. The Punjab certainly knows that it cannot allow judgment to go by default. Its anxiety to please the Simon Commission is legitimate and prudent.

Lest the Reforms should be withdrawn from the Punjab, we find apologies and explanations for a virulent form of communalism which cannot be denied. We are told real Punjab, like real India, dwells in the villages, which are free from communalism; that even in the towns the astute man in the guise of a fanatic who feeds fat on the separate and communal electorates is responsible for the incendiary propaganda inflaming the undeveloped mob-mind with communal passion. Mr. Barkat Ali, a representative of the Punjab Muslim League, told the "Muddiman Committee," named after the president of the Committee which enquired into the working of the reforms in 1924, that the tension between the Hindus and the Muslims is much exaggerated. The minority report of the Muddiman Committee which enters "*a caveat*," as it says, "against the tendency to exaggerate the communal difference," quotes from the evidence of Mr. Barkat Ali :

Q. : I want to put you a few questions about the Hindu-Mohammedan situation in the Punjab. The majority of the population in the Punjab are agriculturists. Are they not? A. : Undoubtedly.

Q. : About 90 per cent. of the population in the Punjab live on agriculture directly or indirectly? A. : Yes.

Q. : Now, is there any Hindu-Mohammedan racial bitterness or feeling in rural areas? A. : Nothing of the kind.

Q. : Because the interests of the Hindu and Mohammedan population in the agricultural portion of the Punjab are common? A. : Yes, identical.

Q. : They have common interests? A. : Yes.

Q. : Now I come to the urban areas. You know that in the Punjab the number of towns exceeding 20,000 in population is very small? A. : Yes, there are only a few large towns in the Punjab.

Q. : In fact, the majority of municipal towns in the Punjab are really large villages? A. : Quite.

Q. : In the smaller towns is there any bitterness of feeling between the Hindus and the Moham-medans? A. : Not much.

Q. : So that this acute phase of communal feeling which is talked of so much exists mainly in the bigger towns in the Punjab. A. : In the larger towns of the Punjab.

Q. : Like Multan, Lahore and Amritsar? A. : You may add to these Rawalpindi also.

What Mr. Barkat Ali says may be right in regard to many villages, but they have not repudiated their representatives who have taken the low communal quarrels to the Legislative Council in the Punjab. Communal riots may not be a daily occurrence in the Punjab—nobody says they are—but it will be untrue to deny that there is a fearful atmosphere of communalism throughout the Punjab.

In Bombay, the Ministers and Indian Members of the Executive Council held identical views regarding the removal of the walls of Dyarchy which divided them. Not only was the reserved half separated from the transferred half, it seemed even ministers worked in water-tight compartments. "There has not been any attempt at making them jointly responsible." On the contrary, "the Ministers have been clearly given to understand that it is the individual Minister who advises and the Governor who acts."*

Lastly, let us dispose of the views† of the Ministers in the lesser Provinces of Burma, the Central Provinces and Assam :

* Minute of Dissent by Indian Members of Executive Council of Bombay Governor.

† Reports of the Local Government on the Reforms Constitution, 1924. Notes by Ministers.

In Burma it is the experience of the Ministers that the absolute control exercised by the Governor over the administration of transferred subjects is "not only inconsistent with the responsibility of the Ministers to the Legislative Council but also encourages some of the heads of departments to question the authority of the Ministers."* It was feared that the transfer of the Rangoon University to the Ministerial control might lower its standards and hamper its progress. Similar misgivings were entertained as regards the transfer of forests. It was thought that the transfer would result in a relaxation of the rules and measures for the conservation and protection of forests. All these fears and misgivings have, in the words of the two Ministers, J. A. Maung Gyi and U. Maung Ghee, "proved groundless." The Legislature backs the Ministers, directing its criticisms to the reserved rather than the transferred subjects. The Ministers are pleased to think that in Burma, "all the provincial subjects may be transferred without any serious risk."

Both the Hindu and the Muslim Ministers of Assam have condemned Dyarchy.

"Dyarchy is unpopular beyond dispute. Few have a good word for it now," says the Hindu Minister: † "To me it seems that in the present temper of the people nothing short of full responsible Government in the provinces, or at least a sure prospect of its early attainment, will placate them. Such a demand is being voiced from all platforms. Their methods are indeed different, but the objective is the same, call them Moderates, Liberals, Swarajists or Congressmen."

* Ibid, page 222.

† Letter of Rai Bahadur P. C. Dutta, dated 19th May, 1924, Pages 198 and 199. Reports of Local Governments for 1924.

The Muslim Minister, the Hon. Syed Muhammas Saadulla, deplores the condition of the ministers, whom he describes as being "under two cross fires." The task of pleasing both masters, the Governor and the Council, is embarrassing. In his opinion :*

"So long as the constitution remains a dual one, there will be vigorous criticism of the present system. If any advance is to be made in the present constitution, there ought to be only one form of Government, that is the Governor and Ministers alone, and all subjects should be treated alike."

The defects of Dyarchy are well-illustrated by one of the Ministers of the Central Provinces, Mr. S. M. Chitnis, who is reminded of "log-rolling" and "bear-baiting."†

"The Ministers are not the colleagues of a trusted and responsible leader. The principle of joint responsibility enunciated by a Joint Parliamentary Select Committee cannot be secured. One Minister is at times likely to work against the other. Each has to shift for himself and to have recourse to what is known as 'Log-rolling.'"

He comes to the conclusion :

"Dyarchy is perhaps a clumsy weapon for forging a system of complete self-government. . . . Not only is complete provincial autonomy essential for progressive Government as well as for administrative efficiency, but even this will not be of full avail without the Central Government being made responsible to the Legislature and being freed of outside control in all matters of internal administration."

Rao Bahadur Kelkar, ex-Minister, thus concluded his note submitted to the Committee on the defects

* Ibid, page 320.

† Ibid, pages 362 to 365.

which he had noticed in the practical working of Dyarchy :

“ There is not merely a division of allegiance on the part of the Service to different halves of the Government. If all subjects are made transferred, these defects or difficulties would be greatly minimised.”

The condemnation of Dyarchy is universal. Sir John Simon requires no fresh evidence on the subject. The responsible leaders of the public have cursed Dyarchy. Will it survive the great curse ?

The Extremist ponders ! How came this Dyarchy into existence ? Indians did not want it, he feels. It is true no Indian suggested this to Mr. Montagu. It does not appear in the vast and voluminous evidence which Indians placed before Mr. Montagu. Dyarchy was a brain-wave of an English theorist, a cultivated writer on constitutional subjects. Mr. Curtis had come to India in connection with the Imperial activities of the *Round Table* group.

The idea of Mr. Lionel Curtis came handy for Mr. Montagu, who acted with the best of intentions. But there are people in India who think that this extraordinary form of Government was introduced so that, even if archangels were to work it, it would not succeed. Then the failure of Dyarchy could be picturesquely explained by sensational American writers as the unfitness of the people for responsible Government.

More responsible people, however, hold that the object of Dyarchy was to provide protection to the interests of the white officials against the aggressions of the Legislature. Up to now the white officials in India were absolute rulers. Henceforward, under the Montagu dispensation, they had to obey the orders from the politicians. The transition was painful to the old officials, who were accustomed only to give and not take orders. They had sought a career in India

in different circumstances. The change was too sudden, too unbearable. Dyarchy was meant to render the transition from bureaucratic to democratic Government less irritating to the nerves of the European in the Indian Civil Service and to help him to accommodate himself gradually to the inevitable political order that must come sooner or later to India, as it has been fast coming to the rest of the world.

Has Dyarchy succeeded in evolving for the officials and unofficials an atmosphere of mutual understanding and sympathy in which they could breathe "the inward fragrance of one another's heart"? Has the working of Dyarchy fulfilled the expectations of the Parliamentary announcement of August, 1917? Have the Councils shown that quality of co-operation which would justify a measure of advance? One section of the people withheld all co-operation because they did not accept the August announcement, as it merely caricatured the pledge of the war—that it would result in the extension of the right of self-determination to subject nations. The Moderates who worked the reforms zealously had a hard time of it during the general elections. The old Moderates were destroyed but new parties sprang into existence, such as Progressives, Responsivists and Independents, who also worked the reforms in the spirit of the Parliamentary announcement of 1917. With the exception of two provinces, where Dyarchy temporarily broke down because of the Swarajist determination to create deadlocks and prove its unworkability, it has been worked in spite of its inherent defects.

During the first three years of the working of the reforms, Dyarchy was left undisturbed within, so far as the Councils were concerned, by the Congress absention. But outside it was discredited before a majority of the electors, who were asked by the Congress to forego their right to vote. During the subse-

quent years, Dyarchy had to face the stormy opposition of the Swarajists and a live electorate which returned them against men of wealth and position. If it did not altogether collapse, it was wholly because of the support of the official block and the nominated members. If the management of Dyarchy had been left entirely to the elected members, the Swarajists would have slaughtered that tender institution without any prick of conscience everywhere in India.

A Parliamentary Commission, which may not care to recognise the adventitious support which Dyarchy has received through non-parliamentary elements, such as the officials and the nominated, may find that Dyarchy has failed and the 1917 pledge of Parliament has been deliberately violated, because they non-co-operated, by a large section of the people of India. This admission may be unpleasant to some of my esteemed countrymen who think that only confessions of success or interpretations of admitted failures by special advocacy as miraculous successes in unfavourable circumstances could induce the Parliamentary examiners to recognise the examinee's right to further advance along the path of reforms. I cannot, however, blink facts. If they impartially examine the Indian people, according to the terms of Section 84 A of the Government of India Act, they cannot help ploughing their oriental students. Under the terms of their appointment, the Statutory Commission "shall report as to whether and to what extent it is desirable to establish the principle of responsible Government or extend, modify or restrict the degree of responsible Government" already existing. There is nothing to prevent the Commission recommending the total withdrawal of the reforms. If they will confine only to their terms of reference, they will have no other alternative but recommend the withdrawal of the reforms. If they act like judges, one need not be surprised if they deliver such a judgment. It may

sound harsh to some, unbearable to many, but it is the most straightforward conclusion that can be drawn from given premises. The Montagu experiment has failed. The Indian people have deliberately defeated the Parliamentary announcement. Those who worked it in the first three years, incurring much unpopularity, have been wrecked and ruined politically. Dyarchy has been disgraced in the public eye. The August announcement has been mangled and mutilated.

All this might have been the result of impatience to get more reforms. It might have been the achievement of an aggressive idealism which would accept nothing short of the ideal. Or it might be the work of the revolutionary, who in the guise of a Home Ruler, joined hands with the whole-hogger constitutionalist to spoil the Montagu experiment, the success of which would have killed every hope of his reviving his pet schemes. So long as people's minds were bent on reforms, there would be no chance for the revolutionary. And there was no hope to turn the people to his way of thinking, if the reforms were not withdrawn.

The Commissioners can hardly be expected to encourage the revolutionary by pronouncing a purely negative judgment without positive recommendations for further advance. To imagine that the Commissioners would be content to act only as judges is to deny them statesmanship. *The Times* wrote the Commission should regard itself "not as a judge but as a *rapporteur*." If they find that the reforms have failed, they will have to state why they have failed. If it is owing to a genuine aspiration for freedom, they will have to devise ways and means to meet that aspiration and at the same time they will have to make adequate provision for the protection of the interests, economic as well as political, of Great Britain in India.

In politics there is no going back. The speeches in Parliament of the Government and the opposition make

this clear. But in Lord Morley's words, India is England's "only Empire," England will not, if she can help it, grant India straightaway complete Home Rule. There is no doubt that Dyarchy will disappear in the provinces. But when Dyarchy goes out by one window, will Home Rule come in by another?

Whatever India's ambition may be, national Home Rule at one jump is perhaps too long for any British Commission to take. The Hindus and the Muslims, the Brahmins and the non-Brahmins have themselves to thank if they find in the communal tendencies, which may be fostered by a communal electorate or exaggerated by "our own correspondents" of newspapers, an argument not to grant complete Home Rule, and for leaving the Central Government as at present constituted untouched by hand, by continuing its responsibility directly to the British people through His Majesty's Government.

If the Commission find that India is too communal, it will have to recommend the abolition of the present communal electorates which have been dangerous nurseries of riots. If, in their opinion, communalism has vitiated the entire outlook of some parties and councils, and until this communalism disappears and nationalism takes its place, the grant of full Dominion Status is out of the question, they will have to recommend the removal of every vestige of communalism from the electorate, and try the experiment of an undivided Government responsible to an undivided electorate, if only in the Provinces. But let there be no misunderstanding: this will not satisfy the Moderates. This will not stay the hands of the Extremists. But this will save the face of the British Commission, so far as the critics at home are concerned, and salve the conscience of the Socialists in Parliament. Also, this will only increase by a hundred-fold the agitation for Home Rule. Agitation only widens the gulf of racial estrangement. Postponement of what,

after all, is going to be granted will only embitter feelings between India and England. This fact is known to those who are anxious that there should be no more estrangement between these two great countries, whose united energy and better understanding alone can solve the question of the races, without which there can be no peace between nations and goodwill amongst mankind.

CHAPTER IX

THE PERMANENT SERVICES

"I BELIEVE the administration of this country will in future become of increasing difficulty, and I believe many an Indian will in future regret that in difficult times, time of great stress and danger, Indians have no European officer to help them in their difficulties or to assist them in the crises that will arise. For myself, too, I look at this elimination of the Englishman from the services in India from another point of view which is even more serious, and that is the breaking up of a great bond between this country and Great Britain which few thoughtful men can contemplate with equanimity."*

In these words, Sir William Vincent expressed the views of many old members of the Indian Civil Service who were feeling, and feeling honestly, that the Reforms had made India unattractive to the young men of Great Britain and Ireland. Similar words have been uttered by other distinguished members of the Indian Civil Service. Sir Charles Innes, now the Governor of Burma, then the commerce member of the Government of India, in recommending to the Assembly the acceptance of the proposals to improve the conditions of the Superior Services and better their prospects if not politically at least financially, said :†

* Legislative Assembly Debates, 11th February, 1922.

† Ibid., 12 September, 1924.

"I do not care what form of Government you have, you must always have something corresponding to the Civil Service; you may change the form of Government, but you cannot change the nature of the people of India, who like a personal rule. Indian politicians are interested only in the form of Government, but there are 240 millions of people in British India who do not care two straws what is the form of Government provided it is a stable one. It cannot be stable without a strong Indian Civil Service and police."

The Services could not like the Reforms, because the power that they had so far was transferred to the Legislature. Their own position is being approximated to the position of the Services in England or the Colonies.

"The influences, which the Services had exercised have been seriously weakened," wrote Sir Michael O'Dwyer, I.C.S. (retired),* "by the reforms scheme and the too rapid Indianisation of the Services."

He did not like their "abdication"† from power. Was it a voluntary abdication? No abdication, as Sir Michael O'Dwyer knows, can be "voluntary." But those who opposed it were labelled "reactionaries"‡ and "their plain speaking only brought on them official disfavour. Some were 'stellenbosched,' others left the service prematurely."§ But alas! for those who remained.

Says the Government of the United Provinces :

"The spirit and the outlook of the services are not what they were. It may be difficult to specify

* *India as I knew it*, page 246.

† *Ibid.*, page 404.

‡ *Ibid.*, page 403.

§ *Ibid.*, page 404.

the precise extent to which they have been affected, or to disentangle the various causes. But of the broad fact there can be little doubt. In the heated political atmosphere of the first fifteen months after the inauguration of the Reforms, the European services were the object of constant vilification and abuse in the Press and on the platform ; indeed, as will be seen from the published proceedings, in the Legislative Council also, where, though criticism was more restrained, it was often hostile and prejudiced. During the more peaceful period, which followed the collapse of the campaign of disorder, matters have much improved, and from various quarters keen appreciation has been expressed of the capacity of European officers to handle a difficult or dangerous situation. But there is still a tendency to look very sharply into any mistakes or shortcomings of hard pressed European officers, and to ignore their reasonable claims. More than one resolution has been passed which, if carried out, would have deprived them of appointments to fill which they had been recruited. It is not suggested that the Legislative Council has deliberately sought to inflict injustice on European officers. The constitution of the all-India services is not well understood, and many members of the legislature are influenced by the feeling, for which there is justification, that in the past Indians have not received their fair share of the higher appointments. The natural effect, however, of the attitude of the legislature has been to create in the minds of Englishmen serving in India an impression of hostility and a feeling of insecurity, which makes it difficult for them to give of their best. There are distinct signs that the services are losing their former keenness. Since they no longer have the power of shaping policy to the extent which they had, they no longer feel that the progress of the country depends upon

their efforts, nor indeed that any efforts of theirs are likely to have abiding results. Enthusiasm and energy have also been sapped by financial pressure, and by the cloud of uncertainty which hangs over the future of the country to which they have given their lives.”*

The Punjab Government remark :†

“ It was, of course, foreseen from the first that though the Government of India, and indeed Parliament, might disinterest themselves in the control of the Transferred Departments, Ministers would, nevertheless, in the first instance, be working with departmental officers whom they would not appoint, and over whom they would not have final control. That position has been formally recognised in Rule 49 (3) of the Devolution Rules. If the proposals of the Lee Commission are carried out in so far as concern the provincialisation of services, the position will be substantially modified.”

The Government of the Central Provinces observe :‡

“ Whilst at the outset the general attitude of the services was one of some doubt about the possibility of success for the reform scheme and of some distrust about their own future under it, there was a genuine desire to assist fully in giving it a fair trial. The distrust was manifested in the formation of associations for the protection of their legitimate interests. This was greatly intensified by the issue of the orders fixing a short time-limit to the scheme for retirements on proportionate pension. It was generally felt that this presaged the intention of the Government to leave them without protection after the expiry of the time-limit, and even the subsequent

* Reports of the Local Governments on the working of the Reformed Constitution (1924) pages 166 and 167.

† Ibid, page 203.

‡ Ibid, pages 315 and 316.

cancellation of the time-limit did not remove altogether this feeling. Again, the first attitude of the local Legislative Council was unfriendly to the Imperial Services. There was a demand for the abolition of several superior posts based on the ground that the administration was top-heavy with supervising appointments and the urgent necessity for retrenchment in expenditure, but believed by the services to be also influenced by racial feeling. There was also a keen desire for the Indianisation of the services, which was intensified by resentment at the fact that the Imperial Services were not subject to their control, their salaries being non-voted items of expenditure. During the last years of its life the feeling of the Legislative Council became less unfriendly to the European services and the services had more confidence in the support of Home Government and Parliament, with the result that the feeling of distrust became perhaps less pronounced. The total number of Indian Civil Servants who took advantage of the proportionate pension scheme was 29 of whom 11 belonged to the Imperial Police and 7 to the Indian Civil Service. Except perhaps in the Police department, it cannot be said that these retirements seriously affected the efficiency of the administration."

In Madras the Government say that :*

"It is an undoubted fact that there has been and still is an appreciable amount of discontent and a considerable feeling of insecurity among these services both as to the terms of their pay and pension and as to their general prospects. The feeling is partly due to the fact that in translating the spirit of the Reforms into practical action a considerable number of posts hitherto reserved or believed to

* Reports of the Local Government on the working of the Reformed Constitution, 1923, pages 19 and 20.

be reserved for Europeans have been thrown open recently, and more are likely to be thrown open in the future, to Indians, as has been already done, to take typical instances, in the Educational and Agricultural services, while others have been abolished or threatened with abolition. A second cause is uncertainty as to how the constitution of India under the Reforms will develop in the future. A third arises out of the economic conditions which are a legacy of the war.

“The relations between the Ministry and the heads of departments under their control have generally been cordial; and the local Legislative Council, though naturally sympathetic towards Indian aspirations, has not been unreasonable in its attitude towards the British services. Individual members of the service have undoubtedly found it difficult to serve under the altered conditions; but the great majority have accepted the change in a most loyal spirit and have done their best to make the Reforms a success. The best proof of harmony lies in the fact that, despite the enormous displacement of the centre of political gravity due to the Reforms, the departments have continued to be manned by the same individuals, as heads of departments or as Secretaries to Government, as before the Reforms. Naturally the efforts of these permanent officials have been generally directed towards maintaining continuity, but it is at the same time undeniable that greatly increased respect is now evinced by officials of all classes towards the decisions of the Council as well as towards the status of its members. Thus genial and cordial relations have been created between the chief representatives of the old and of the new régime which, considering the short time the Reforms have been in operation, may be described as extremely satisfactory. The difficulties of the task are not to be denied or under-rated; and it has

to be remembered that not only the officials but the people themselves have had to learn a new lesson." The Government of Bihar and Orissa state :*

" The authors of the Joint Report contemplated that for many years the All-India Services would continue their beneficent work in harmony with the new institutions which were to be created, guiding, and to some extent moulding, the proceedings of the Ministers and the Council. This hope, however, seems doomed to frustration. Both the Council and the Ministers realise that, for the present, the knowledge and experience of the services are indispensable to them, but they cannot be expected to remain in leading strings for an indefinite period, and it is inevitable that they should desire a greater degree of independence. They feel also (though so far the feeling is based on theory rather than on any actual *impasse* that has arisen) that, so long as the All-India Services are responsible ultimately to the Government of India and the Secretary of State, they have not full control even over the transferred subjects, and any prolonged continuance of this arrangement would be resented. Probably the first demand put forward by an autonomous provincial Government would be for the complete control of the public services working within its borders. Since January, 1921, the demand for Indianisation has assumed a new form ; it is now rather for Indianisation through provincialisation, and this tendency, especially since the argument of economy can be used in its support, is likely to strengthen as time goes on. Speaking broadly, provincialisation means Indianisation. It is quite possible that the provincial Governments of the future may be content to employ for a time a proportion of European officers, but as regards future recruitment they will

* Ibid., pages 183 and 184.

seek to impose the condition that these shall be responsible to them and not to any external authorities.

"The view of the present situation and of its probable developments outlined above is, of course, merely a forecast, of which time alone can prove the accuracy or otherwise, but it is the view taken by a growing proportion of the services. They foresee in the India of the not very distant future no place for them as services in the sense in which these previously existed, and it is this feeling more than anything else which is responsible for premature retirements and for pessimism as to the expediency of future recruitment. The position of the other services is not quite the same, for they never shared in the control of the administration to the same extent as did the Indian Civil Service. Their position, therefore, is not so radically changed. But they too are witness of the steady pressure maintained by the Legislative Council for the abolition of the higher appointments which are the prizes of the services, and of the spirit of racialism which tends increasingly to dominate discussions about the services.

"In the circumstances described above, it is not surprising that members of the services should feel that their tenure is extremely insecure, and that any chance of securing suitable employment elsewhere is worth accepting. In some cases the present rates of pay are regarded as inadequate, but apart from that the move for premature retirement is not so much that the present state of things is intolerable, as that the future holds out few prospects. There is this also to be added—it applies specially to those officers who are most hopeful of India's future and most willing to be of service to her—that no man cares to go on working when his services are not wanted. It is doubtless this distrust of the services

regarding the future which is responsible for the birth of numerous service associations, and particularly of the European Government Servants' Association, which has not been recognised by the Government of India or the Local Government, as it includes the Indian Police amongst the All-India Services represented in its membership. The exception thus taken by Government to the inclusion of the Police was bitterly resented. It is unfortunate that this vogue of service association has taken a racial turn, and the reply to the European Government Servants' organisation has, not unnaturally, been the formation of a similar association for the Indian members of the superior services."

In a pregnant sentence on which a volume can be written, the Bengal Government* point out that :

"The Indian non-official members, as a whole, were also till recently extremely keen on Indianisation of the Services, but even this plank is not so firm as formerly owing to the growth of communal strife in the Council."

The responsible Indian view may be stated :*

"While it is possible to understand the feeling that the services have no longer the power of shaping policy to the extent that they had or their feeling that the progress of the country no longer depends upon their efforts, or that any efforts of theirs are not likely to have abiding results, it may as well be pointed out here that this is the inevitable consequence of the transference of power, limited as it is to local Legislatures ; and indeed it constituted the *raison d'être* of the Reforms. The Imperial services in the past have been mainly responsible

* Ibid., pages 118 and 119.

* Minority Report of the Reforms Enquiry Committee of 1924, pages 161, 162 and 163.

for the shaping of policy in India, and the combination of political and administrative functions in the services is, to our mind, mainly responsible for the frequency and strength of the criticism to which they have been exposed in the past. The immunity which public services in England or the Dominions enjoy from hostile or unfriendly criticism cannot, we are afraid, be secured for the services in this country in any large measure unless, among other things, the relations of the services to the Legislatures are brought into closer approximation with those prevailing in England or the Dominions. When it is recognised by the public that the services are mere instruments for the execution of the policy of the Government and that they have no political functions to discharge, we think they will cease to be the targets of that criticism which is pointed out as an undesirable feature of the present political conditions in India; for when that stage is reached, it will be the responsible Ministers and not the services who will have to bear the brunt of public criticism. As matters stand at present, the control of the services or their recruitment does not rest with the local Governments or with the Government of India. It seems to us, therefore, that in the best of circumstances the present position is apt to give rise at times to friction and a feeling of mutual distrust which cannot be conducive to efficient and good administration. We venture to think that under the present system, the entire constitution, the methods of recruitment and control of the services are incompatible with the situation created by the Reforms and the possibility of their further developments. The present organisation of the services came into existence when admittedly the centre of political gravity was outside India and when the services took a leading part in the shaping of policy. Those conditions

have appreciably changed and will change still further, and it is but natural that there should be dissatisfaction among the services with their position and also among the Legislatures with the restraints and limitations imposed on their powers in relation to the services. We think that the question of the services is inseparably connected with the question of constitutional development in India and we are of the opinion that the relation of the services to the Legislatures cannot be put on a satisfactory and enduring basis by a mere amendment of the rules or even by the delegation of certain powers under section 96 B. We desire to repeat what we have already stated, that the position of the permanent services in India should be placed on the same basis as in England. We fully realise the imperative necessity of safeguarding the interests of the services. Whether this can be achieved by the passing of an Act by the Imperial Parliament or by the Indian Legislature or by the incorporation of special provisions for the protection of the rights and interests of the services in the future Constitution of India, are questions on which we recognise there may be differences of opinion. Whichever method is adopted, we are persuaded that the question calls for an effective and early solution."

The responsible official view may be quoted :*

"None of us would deny that during the months following the inauguration of the Reforms the services were subjected to much unjust criticism and to a great deal of annoyance. We are, however, of opinion that criticism of the services is inevitable in the present conditions of India. The extent to which the permanent official may by his advice influence policy is apt to concentrate criticism on

* Majority Report of the Reforms Enquiry Committee of 1924, pages 41 and 42.

him which should rightly attach to the government which adopts the policy. This is unjust and unfair but, in view of the position which the services have held in the past, is not altogether unnatural. It is possible that the services do not sufficiently make allowance for this aspect of the case. Criticism they will inevitably encounter in the exercise of their functions, and some of this criticism may be quite unjust. That is perhaps a consequence of a democratic or a partially democratic constitution. It is when that criticism takes a racial bias that we all consider that it must be wholly condemned."

The practice must be put an end to of placing members of the permanent services who are not elected to the Legislatures in positions which ought to belong to Ministers who are elected members of the Legislature. The present practice of placing members of the permanent services, many of them admirable men of versatile ability, in an invidious position, calls for frequent vehement comment in the Press, as the services are taken to be the Government. An irremovable Executive drawn from the members of the permanent services may have virtues of its own, but its qualification to be leader of the House has always been called into question. With the growth of public opinion and the presence of educated and first-rate public men entering the Legislatures, even the semi-official Press had begun to admit the superiority of the elected non-official opposition to the permanent powers that be who owe their place in the Legislature to the nomination of the head of the Government.

In his note on the proposed enlargement of the Legislative Councils, Sir V. Bhashyam Aiyangar, C.I.E., a former judge of the Madras High Court, observed :*

* Papers relating to Minto-Morley Reforms published under the authority of the Government of India, 1908, Vol. II, Government Printing, Calcutta.

"I was a member of the local Legislative Council for several years prior to 1892 and for several years subsequent thereto, and my humble opinion is the working of the enlarged Legislative Council has by no means been satisfactory in a political point of view. An opposition has unconsciously been created and the relations between the official members and the non-official members and in particular the elected members are far from being cordial. There is no doubt that legislative measures are debated upon and criticised more ably and freely by the non-official members than was the case prior to 1892, but so far as official members are concerned, though their number has been increased, fewer of them take part in the debates and the theory, unwritten though it be, that they should all vote solidly with the ordinary member of Council in charge of the Bill has a most demoralizing effect. . . . Since the enlargement of the Councils in 1892, there has been a preponderance of leading Vakils amongst the non-officials, who, by their training at the bar, have a decided advantage over their official colleagues, most of whom belong to the Indian Civil Service, the members of which have proved themselves remarkably successful as administrators by reason of the fact that their policy hitherto has been one of decisive action and discreet silence while their official training is not such as to qualify them to make extempore speeches or to meet debates in Council."

The above observation was made twenty years ago. Since then much water has flown down the Thames. But the permanent officials who still represent the Government in the Legislatures and who are supposed to educate Indians in the art of Parliamentary Government appear to have been surpassed by their talented pupils. Testimony to this fact is borne ungrudgingly from all quarters, European as well as officials.

"If they (the official members) are incapable of accommodating themselves to the rapier thrust and the interplay of opposing blades of a Parliamentary Assembly," wrote one of the leading English journals in India, which has hitherto been considered a semi-official organ,* "they have no right to be where they are and no amount of expert knowledge can excuse their failure."

The same paper in the same editorial spoke of the official members of being

"guilty of bad parliamentary tactics, of a display of arrogance to which their official record does not entitle them and of a deplorable want of knowledge of the art of persuading men."

It further remarked that they were

"exhibiting a phase of British régime in India which all right-minded people would like to see abolished immediately." Its own suggestion however to prevent "all that they get in the way of parliamentary rebuff" was "to attend vacation courses at Westminster studying the methods of parliamentary procedure."

This suggestion, however, does not go to the root of the evil. The system is admittedly a transitional one and the defects referred to will not be removed by vacation courses in Westminster but by making the period of transition, from the present form to the one in Westminster, as short and swift as possible. This form has been promised in the Parliamentary announcement of August, 1917. In the words of the joint authors of the Reforms†

"our policy is irrevocably declared and it ought to content all sober minds. We are no longer seeking

* *The Pioneer* of 14th March, 1928

† Montagu-Chelmsford Report, para. 324.

to govern a subject race by means of the services ; we are seeking to make the Indian people self-governing."

Pari passu with the democratisation of the system will the "Indianisation" of the services continue? "Indianisation" is not used here in the sense in which that expression is generally used by the politician who wants to eliminate the Europeans in the services. The true form of Indianisation is different. It would consist in making the services constitutionally responsible to the Government of India instead of the Secretary of State. The present responsibility of the services to the Secretary of State is fast being recognised as an anomaly so far as the Ministerial departments in the Provinces are concerned. When the Provinces are endowed with responsibility for the smooth working of the administration, either the responsibility of the Services will have to be transferred from the Secretary of State for India to the Government of India or the Provinces will have to be held directly responsible to the Secretary of State and not the Government of India. This question will be discussed at a later stage. But if the unitary system of Government is to be maintained, if the provinces are not to be split into independent units each owing direct responsibility to the Secretary of State for India and if India is to grow as one nation, under one Government, then it follows "as the night the day," that the Services should be responsible to the chief authority in India.

The inevitable change that has come over the Services has naturally cooled the old enthusiasm of the young Englishman, fresh from the University, to go out to India. He is aware that a Nationalist movement has also been gathering in strength and noise. Nobody likes to go to a country where he is not wanted, be it even by a section which is sufficiently vociferous

to disturb his domestic peace or official life. Even English families having old connection with India do not feel like sending their boys to a land whose climate is bad enough for any Englishman, but whose torrid politics make it doubly worse.

The Indian agitator does not realise what a hardship it is for an Englishman to live in a tropical country. Life in India has not been an attraction even to men of the eminence of Viceroy and Governor-Generals. They might have slept in their cabins while sailing out to India and dreamt that life in India was a beauty. Soon after their taking charge, however, they are made to realise that it is more than an Imperial duty. Lord Curzon's stately volumes on Governments of India speaks of the sorrows of many a Proconsul :*

Warren Hastings suffered from Bengal's malaria, where he lived for thirteen years. The Javan expedition sapped Minto's strength. Canning became prematurely old.

"The first Lady Minto was not able to go out to India and from the day when her husband started for his great voyage, never saw him again until his body was carried into the gates of their Scottish home."

"Dalhousie forfeited all sight of his children during the long years of his Satrapy until, in the evening of his time, he was joined by his daughter. When he heard of their illness at home, he once wrote: 'The sweetest chapters of their life are being written while we are far away transported to this penal settlement'."

Lord Dufferin resigned to join his children. The bodies of Cornwallis and the first Lord Elgin rest on Indian soil; they never returned home.

"A third Lord Mayo came back to the home of

* *British Government of India*, Vol II, pages 252, 253 and 254.

his birth a dead and murdered man in his coffin. A later Viceroy, Lord Hardinge, of Penshurst, narrowly escaped, by the mercy of Providence, from a similar fate. The first Lord Minto, Dalhousie and Canning only returned, worn out, to die."

Lord Curzon furnishes more "poignant testimony to the sorrows and risks of Indian life." When Viceroys, in their comforts, authority and position feel unhappy, how much more must Englishmen in humbler stations, living amidst greater risks and sorrows, feel?

The Indian agitator knew that if only he went on making an already hot country hotter by his agitation the Englishman would come to terms.

The agitation has, however, alienated the feelings of many a good old English family so deeply interested in India.

"I know that it is customary to speak of Englishmen in this country as birds of passage," said Sir William Vincent, "with no permanent interest in India or its welfare. Honourable Members will believe me when I say that many Englishmen, including myself, have spent much more of their lives in India than in England and they retain an abiding affection for this country with which they would like, in other conditions, to have seen their sons connected. Who can tell me that I can forget my affection for a country where I spent the best part of my life, where I have made so many good friends and done work of such absorbing interest?"

It is clear these words come from a friend of India. But let us see what is the feeling of such friends of India in the Services:

"The feeling generally in the Services is," says Sir William Vincent,* "that the conditions of service have been fundamentally changed, that their position is not the same, that efficiency may be sacri-

* Legislative Assembly Debates, 11th February, 1922.

ficed to political exigencies and that the future is not assured and, it is at least probable, that this may affect the number and class of recruits that come to this country. It is certain that many who, actuated by long family traditions of service in India, would have liked to come out to India, will, in future, avoid this country as one in which to spend their lives. Indeed, I know of few men in the Service now who are anxious that any of their relatives or sons should come out to any Service in India, although they themselves have served for many years."

What attraction could an Englishman have for Service in India? He leaves for good his own home. He gives the best of his life to the land of his service. When he retires, he feels almost a stranger in his own land. No Englishman who can secure a decent job in his own country would care to go out to India. In the words of Sir William Vincent:

"There is this undoubted fact of the reduced amenities of this country, amenities of all kinds and particularly Social amenities and the amenities of every-day work. There is this atmosphere of hostility in which our officers have now to work. (*A voice 'No.'*) Who has the audacity to say 'No' to that in this Assembly? I challenge any member to deny that every District Officer in present conditions is performing most arduous and most difficult duties under almost intolerable conditions by reason of this hostility."

The climax of agitation has been reached in recent years. The depth of disgust for Service in India has also been reached the same time. With the growth of agitation, the enthusiasm for a career in India diminished among the young men of England. Statistics are more eloquent than words:

"For the years 1897-1916, in the Indian Civil Service, the total recruitment of Indians was 66 and of others 960. In 1917-1921 the recruitment of Indians was 59 as against 126 Europeans; and in 1921, 37 Indians and 38 others were admitted to the Service. That is, practically, up to 50 per cent."*

Contrast with the above the present state of things. The strength of the Indian Civil Service is 1,250. Of this half will be British and the other half Indian.

Both the Indian and the European members of Lord Lee's Commission unanimously recommended that a preponderating British element should always remain in the superior Services to ensure the British standard, and Indo-British connection. In the Indian Civil Service and Police, which are to remain All-India Services, there must always be 50 per cent. of the British element. All the other Superior Services, except Forest and Irrigation Officers in certain provinces are, according to the Lee report, "provincialised," that is placed under the control of Provincial Governments and Indian Ministers. The following table† will illustrate the point, giving as it does the present strength of the Services and the future policy:

Indian Civil Service	...	1,250	} to remain all-India Services, but British element reduced to one-half.
„ Police „	...	739	
Forest „	...	348	} All, except Forest and Irrigation officers in certain Provinces, to be provincialised, that is placed under the Control of Provincial Governments and Indian Ministers.
Educational Services		345	
Agricultural „		109	
Veterinary „		38	
Engineering „		733	
Medical (Civil) Service		373	
Total	...	3,935	

* Home Member's Statement in the Assembly, 11th February, 1922.

† Lord Lee's Commission Report on Superior Services.

Pointing to the statistics, the Government argue "is it fair in these circumstances to say that the doors have been closed to the recruitment of Indians in the Services ? "

To which the Nationalist replies :

" But the door is shut on Indians at fifty per cent. of the total strength of the Services ! "

The fixing of the European percentage has had a disastrous effect on the Mohammedans. A crude agitation has been set up by the Muslims that a similar percentage should be fixed for them also on the ground that they are a minority. They say that a special consideration has been shown to the minorities in lands which were once Muslim. We are assured by imaginative people that though the percentage is not embodied in the constitution of Czecho-Slovakia, which is the political *quoran* of the minority*, there is a convention in that wonderful country. But conventions do not grow with the rapidity of the Prophet's gourd. The Muslim is too impatient to let conventions grow. He says there are more Hindus in the Services than Muslims and therefore the place of " a powerful minority " has to be ensured. He will have proportional representation in the Services, though he is unwilling to extend the same privilege to the Indian Christian minorities. To the goodness of the Christian minorities be it said they have not clamoured for communal representation in the Services. They are a small group. If there is to be communal representation—though this is unthinkable and impossible in the Services because efficiency is an important consideration—that concession must first go to the Christians, the Anglo-Indians, the Depressed classes and the Sikhs, who are important sections of the population, though this does not occur to the Muslim fanatic. The joke

**What are the Rights of the Muslim Minority in India ?* By S. A. Khan. Indian Press, Allahabad.

is, if communal representation is to be introduced in the Services, some of the excellent Muslims in the Police and the provincial executive of the United Provinces will have to be dismissed, because they who form only 14 per cent. of the population have a much larger proportion !

The Muslims cannot expect to dominate the Services unless he is also prepared to qualify himself. In the beginning of British rule the ideals of English education did not appeal to him, he sent his children to the "Madrasahs," whereas the Hindu boys went to the English schools and colleges. The result has been reported by a competent authority*, in regard to a Province where the Muslims are 54 per cent. of the population, according to the latest census :

"On the 31st March, 1917, the Mussulmans represented less than one-fifth of the total number of pupils in the high stage, less than a quarter of the pupils in the middle stage, and just over a fifth of the pupils in the high and middle stages of school education taken together. In other words, though the Mussulmans represent 52.7 per cent. of the population of the Bengal Presidency, their children constitute only about a fifth of the boys and girls who are receiving a secondary school education."

The cause for this educational backwardness among the Muslims has been recorded by a well-known writer : †

"The truth is that our system of public institutions ignores the three most powerful instincts of the Mussulman heart. In the first place, it conducts education in the vernacular of Bengal, a language which the educated Muhammadans despise, and by means of Hindu teachers. . . . In

* *Calcutta University Commission*, Vol. I, pages 162-164.

† *Indian Mussulmans*. By Sir William Hunter.

the second place, our rural schools seldom enable a Muhammadan to learn the tongues necessary for his holding a respectable position in life, and for the performance of his religious duties. Every Muhammadan gentleman must have some knowledge of Persian, and Persian is a language unknown even in our higher class district schools. Every Mussulman, from the highest to the lowest, ought to say his prayers in one of the sacred languages, Persian or Arabic, and this our schools have never recognised. In the third place, our system of education makes no provision for the religious education of the Muhammadan youth."

Surely a backward community like that with special representation in the Services will only deteriorate and demoralise the administration, make it incompetent and corrupt, dishonest and inefficient as in the days of Muslim misrule. If nepotism is to be put on the Gadi, communalism may be admitted to the services. If, on the other hand, their integrity and the *morale* are to remain inviolate, there can be no other standard of admission than that which prevails in England and has been assured to India in the Queen's proclamation.

CHAPTER X

THE DEPRESSED CLASSES

CASTES exist all the world over in one form or another ; but the number of the outcastes in India is generally estimated at 60 millions. Even the Secretary of State for India made a statement to that effect in the House of Lords last year. The latest official figure, however, is 28½ millions. This, it will be admitted on all hands, is a very large population.

The plight of the depressed classes, backward masses, peasants and village labourers has been dealt with by the present writer elsewhere.* It is gratifying to note that because of the activities of Mahatma Gandhi and the Arya Samaj and the scope given to the Ministers by the Reforms, the condition of the depressed classes has been improving rapidly considering the mass of prejudice of ages against them.

Out of a population of 28½ millions, it is interesting to note that 660,000 children are in the schools. The number may be small, but when it is remembered that this is chiefly the achievement of the recent Reforms, it will be understood that the spirit of democracy has begun to permeate the land. Education is a provincial subject which has been transferred to the control of the people. It speaks volumes in favour of the Ministers of Education that they have given special attention to the most oppressed class in the country. The statistics available for the education of the depressed classes are confined to the Reform era, for the

* FATHER INDIA, by C. S. Ranga Iyer. Selwyn & Blount.

period between 1917 and 1926. In that period, the number of scholars has risen from 295,000 in 1917 to 667,000 in 1926* The increase, it will be noted, has been more than 100 per cent.

“It is only fair at this stage to state,” said the Government spokesman in a recent debate in the Assembly, “that a considerable part of the progress which has been made in the provision of facilities for the education of the depressed classes and the increase that has taken place in the number of students belonging to the depressed classes has taken place since the inception of the Reforms in 1921.”

This admission is valuable, because it is an effective reply to those who say that the depressed classes have been opposed to the Reforms! Instead of taking shelter behind the depressed classes, it will be honest and brave of these critics to confess that they themselves have been opposed to the Reforms. The greatest enthusiasm for Reforms, as Lord Birkenhead himself said in a memorable speech at Doncaster, prevails among the depressed classes, the genuine supporters of Sir John Simon.

The progress in the matter of education of the depressed classes has been confined not to one or two Provinces, but it is universal from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin, from the Hindu Kush mountains to the Bay of Bengal. The presidency of Madras where the treatment of the depressed classes is the most appalling the increase of the school-going children has been remarkable.

The following table of the latest official figures will convey an idea of the progress made :

* Official Statement in the Legislative Assembly on 28th February, 1928.

Provinces or Presidencies					Number of Pupils in 1917 to 1926
1.	Madras	...	...	...	114,000 to 209,000
2.	Bombay	...	...	...	28,000 to 55,000
3.	Bengal	...	...	...	88,000 to 250,000
4.	United Provinces	...	...	...	16,000 to 75,000
5.	The Punjab	...	...	...	3,000 to 19,000
6.	The Central Provinces	...	...	...	26,000 to 34,000
7.	Bihar and Orissa	...	...	...	19,000 to 23,000
8.	Assam	...	...	...	— —
9.	Burma	...	...	...	— —

Burma and Assam must be congratulated, because there are no depressed classes in those provinces.

The money allotted for the "nation-building department," as the transferred subjects have been called, is so small that greater progress could not have been effected, though it was the ambition of the Brahmin Education Minister of the United Provinces—whose life has been a sermon on Social Reform—to bring light into the darkness of the lives of the depressed classes, which was the only way to elevate them. When, twenty-five years ago, young Mr. Chintamani harangued large crowds on the elevation of the depressed classes, which could be brought about only by their education, he could have hardly imagined that he would have been called upon to translate the dream of his younger years into actuality. But he, like other ministers, was handicapped for want of funds.

One of the ex-Ministers of the Central Provinces, in a comprehensive statement, reveals the financial restrictions, judging from which one is surprised that they have been able to do so much for a long-contemned community. If a Minister wants to set apart more money for the education of the depressed classes, the obstacles that Dyarchy places in his way are numerous and sickening. The Minister is at the mercy of the Finance Member, who owes no responsibility to the council, but as part of the Governor-in-Council is responsible to the Secretary of State separated from

India by half the world. The Finance Member does not worry more than he can help about the transferred subjects, for the administration of which he has no responsibility. If the Finance Member does not feel impressed with the Minister's anxieties for the depressed classes, the latter will do well to bury this grievance in his bosom. At the utmost he can take the matter to the Governor—to whom the Finance Member is subordinate—after the manner of a complaining pupil. He cannot take the one body to which he owes an answer, namely the Legislative Council, into his confidence as to the fate that was meted out to him by the reserved half or its chief. That is inevitable under a cabinet system of Government, but at present the Minister is only a glorified dummy of an irresponsible cabinet !

The painful process of getting money for the education of the depressed classes can be understood from this disheartening description :*

“ The powers of the Finance Department are all-embracing, and the Ministers are so much under the leading strings of this Department that they can do nothing without previously consulting it. The different stages through which a financial proposal has to pass from an administrative department to the Legislative Council are the following :

“ If a department takes an initiative in the matter, the proposal first comes before a Secretary to Government, it then goes to the Minister-in-charge ; if it secures his approval it goes for scrutiny and examination to the Finance Department ; after coming out of this ordeal it goes to the Finance Committee of the Council, and last of all it comes for final sanction before the Legislative Council.”

* NOTE, dated the 23th May, 1924 (Annexe to the Report of Local Governments, 1924, pages 320, 321, 323, 324).

From an enumeration of all these powers of the Finance Department, the Minister does not want to give an impression that he objects to these powers being exercised by it. It is clear that the Ministers must always and in every country depend on expert financial advice. But the point he wants to make is that

“ the expert authority, viz., the Provincial Finance Department, possessing such wide powers of control on the Ministers, is in its turn controlled by an Executive Councillor. In every little matter the departmental heads of Transferred Departments must obtain the sanction not so much of the Ministers to whom they are responsible but a Department outside the control of Ministers. The powers of the purse are thus entirely in the hands of the Executive Council. The Finance Department possesses the constitutional power of conducting itself in such a way as to keep the Transferred Departments on reduced rations. One technical objection or another, from a finance point of view, can always be raised against schemes of new expenditure, and the Ministers can thus be prevented from taking proper measures in pursuance of their policies. So long as this state of affairs can occur, Ministers cannot avoid being controlled and impeded in their actions by the other half of Government.”

Bearing the above facts in mind, we must take off our hats to the Ministers, whose sole concern has been to uplift an unfortunate class of their down-trodden countrymen.

Another good thing that the Ministers have done to break the barriers between the untouchables and the higher classes is to admit the children of the former to the schools of the latter and *vice versa*. According to the latest official statement* :

* Legislative Assembly debates, 23rd February, 1928.

"in 1925, in the United Provinces, 56,000 students belonging to the depressed classes were reading in public schools, and of this 56,000 33,000 were reading in ordinary schools and 23,000 or less than half were reading in special schools. In the case of the Punjab, the figures are still more striking. But of roughly 19,000 odd students, 16,000 were reading in ordinary schools and 3,000 odd were reading in special schools."

Another significant feature of the administration of the Department of Education by Indian Ministers is that the depressed classes are faring better in the matter of primary education than even the upper classes :

"Whereas the percentages of pupils of the depressed classes has increased from 1 to 2.3, that is to say by more than 100 per cent., the percentages of the higher classes has risen only from 3 to 4 or roughly 33½ per cent."*

No wonder "the millions of depressed classes," as Lord Birkenhead put it, are enthusiastic about the Simon Commission.

With the disappearance of Dyarchy and the introduction of complete responsible Government, the Ministers will succeed in wiping out the blot on the family of mankind.

Replying to an address presented by a deputation of the depressed classes, His Excellency the Governor of the Central Provinces said :

"During my long service I have seen a great advance among the depressed classes, an advance to my mind greater than has been made by any other community within the same period. I have known individuals of the Mahar community rise to positions of importance and wealth and I find them taking

* Ibid.

part in the trade of the country, and some of the most important contractors are Mahars. Your education is increasing rapidly, and I find a demand amongst Mahars for facilities for primary education."

In the same speech His Excellency Sir Frank Sly stated :

" There is no political party in India which does not recognise that the position of the depressed classes is a serious difficulty on the road towards full responsible Government. The disabilities of the depressed classes are recognised by all political parties, whether extremists or moderates, and it is the desire of those political parties that this disability should be lessened and removed as soon as possible."*

In his evidence before the Muddiman Committee Mr. A. N. Surve, representative of the backward classes of Bombay, threw fresh light on the interest taken by the higher classes in the amelioration of the condition of the lower ones. As for the education of Mahars, Chamars, Bhangis, the most degraded of the depressed, Mr. Surve said :

" As far as their education is concerned, since the reformed councils we have made some progress. The Government has issued a circular that if any school does not admit a student belonging to the depressed classes, that fact will be taken as sufficient ground to take off the grant. Similarly, a resolution was passed in the Bombay Legislative Council whereby the wells and springs are thrown open simply as a matter of restitution to the depressed classes. That resolution applies only to those wells and springs which are maintained at the expense of the Government or local bodies."

* Speech delivered on the 21st July, 1924, by Sir Frank Sly.

Q.—You said that the Government has issued a circular removing some of these disabilities? *A.*—Yes.

Q.—Which part of the Government? The reserved half or the transferred half? *A.*—I should think the transferred half. My friend Mr. Paranjpaye was instrumental in doing that.

Sir P. C. Mitter, an ex-Minister, gave the following evidence before the Reforms Committee of 1924 in regard to the work done in Bengal:

Q.—Who are the depressed classes in Bengal, what is their position and what are their difficulties? *A.*—The so-called lower classes, Mochis, Chandals, Haris, Doms, etc.

Q.—What are their disabilities? Are they allowed to draw water out of a common well? *A.*—In most places—not in all places. There is no acute problem in Bengal so far as the depressed classes are concerned.

Q.—What about Namasudras? *A.*—In some places they are not allowed in school hostels. Certain cases came up to me. I ordered they must be allowed and I never heard anything after that.

Q.—But were your orders carried out? *A.*—Absolutely. Higher classes don't object, most of them have no strong feeling.

Q.—Will you please tell the Committee what is exactly the extent of the problem there? *A.*—Very little. Nothing serious.

Q. (Mr. Chairman).—Yes, but I think the Bengal village is a very different thing from the village up-country, the houses are much more separated, is not that so? Everyone has his own little plot and the villages are spread over much more ground? *A.*—Yes.

Q. (Mr. Chairman).—And the water question is very simple? *A.*—All castes take their water from the tanks. Nobody objects to that, whatever his caste may be.

Q.—Then what are exactly the social and religious disabilities under which a member of the depressed

class finds himself in Bengal? A.—It is more a creation of some ambitious men. There is no very serious disability.

Q.—Now supposing there was to be provincial autonomy in your province, do you, with your knowledge of Bengal, think that the position of the depressed classes under responsible Government would be worse than it has been in the past, or will it be better than it has been in the past, or will it be about the same? A.—It will certainly be very much better. I don't think the depressed classes have had any such attention from the Government in the past as during the last three years in Bengal.

Pundit Gokarun Nath Misra, himself a Kanyakubj Brahmin, belonging to an orthodox family, has been an enthusiastic advocate of the elevation of the untouchables. In his statement to the Muddiman Committee, the Pundit (now Honourable Justice) Gokaran Nath Misra said :

“ With regard to the attitude not only of the educated people but of the uneducated people in the United Provinces towards the depressed classes, I must say that their attitude has never been a hostile one. Even with regard to the temples which are situated in Ajodhya, Benares and Muttra, where I have personally been a number of times on religious visits, I have never found any people of the depressed classes being excluded from visiting those temples. They have gone along with the rest of the Mela, as it is called, or with the rest of the crowd. With regard to the educated people, their attitude has been always one of growing sympathy.”

The enthusiasm of the non-official members of the Legislative Assembly for the depressed classes is illustrated by the following resolution which a member of the upper middle classes of Bombay moved on 23rd February this year :

“ This Assembly recommends to the Governor-

General in Council to issue directions to all Local Governments to provide special facilities for the education of the untouchables and other depressed classes, and also for opening all public services to them, specially the Police."

The Government showed its sympathy by not opposing the resolution and expressing much keenness to relieve the distress of the depressed.

Lala Lajpat Rai, whose life in India has been spent in raising these fallen people, was not satisfied with the academic resolution. Therefore he moved the following amendment :

" That, at the end of the Resolution, the following be added : ' And this Assembly further recommends to the Governor General in Council to sanction one crore of rupees for the education of the depressed classes from the Central funds and to issue orders that all wells that are not private, all streets and roads that are public and all institutions which are financed or managed partly or wholly from public funds be opened to the depressed classes and that a special list be made of untouchables and others who are not untouchables but are at present included in the depressed classes in Government records '."

The amendment was defeated by the Government, in spite of the Lala's challenge to the self-appointed trustees of the depressed classes

Say what the critic may, however unsatisfactory the Government's allotment of finances for education may be, there can be no denying the fact that their constant challenge to the educated classes who were asking for reforms and equality with the ruling classes, to reform themselves and give equality to the depressed classes, has had the desired effect. Incidentally the purpose and spirit of the Reforms have been vindicated and the necessity to get rid of the hybrid system of Dyarchy which stands between the depressed classes and the light of the world has been once for all established.

CHAPTER XI

THE AWAKENING OF THE PEASANTS.

"THE minds of India's peasant soldiery," anticipated the authors of the Reforms,* "who have returned from abroad will never again work quite in the old way and they will relate their experiences to many who stayed at home."

"They are often contemptuously branded as the voiceless millions of India," was the observation made in another official report, of which the authors of the Montford scheme had taken notice :

"But the charge is untrue. They do not ask much or often but that is because they want so little. Nevertheless if they are aggrieved, they do not hesitate to say so. They may not be vocal but they are not entirely voiceless."

The Reforms gave many of them votes and thus made them vocal, even vociferous. When Mahatma Gandhi was preaching Swaraj with an energy never known before, all that they understood by it was more bread and butter. When the candidates for the councils, men of wealth and position, dance attendance on them for their votes, they know they are somebodies.

The Indian *ryot* has not been without experience of public life, if, in his own limited and narrow sphere. From time immemorial the village Panchayets settled the dispute of the villagers, looked after the health and wealth of the people and created an *esprit de corps*. In the last century the Panchayets "dwindled

* Montagu-Chelmsford Report, para. 146.

long by slow decay." There have been recent attempts to revive them. The Panchayets decayed and disappeared because they could not stand the onslaught of modern civilization. But the spread of the co-operative movement, for which much credit is due to official help and non-official earnestness, was once again reviving the villages and organising the social forces. A fully developed village in India would be the nucleus of co-operative industrial organisation.

Mahatma Gandhi's stronghold was the village. His followers explained that the Reform was a sham; it gave votes only to a very small percentage of villagers. There arose a keen feeling among the villagers why the Government should have discriminated in the matter of votes. The denial of votes to many was felt. They did not know nor care about the Reform rules and the qualification thereunder for votes. Those who had votes looked upon them as a new form of recognition by the Government of their importance. If they had not joined the Mahatma's fold they made a point of exercising their new rights. If, however, they turned non-co-operators, they were pledged not to go to the polls and vote. The hold of the non-co-operators was no doubt great. The name of the Mahatma was one to conjure with in the villages. His hold was no doubt greater on the villagers than on the urban population, though he had a great hold on the latter also.

Let us take the case of a typical presidency, Bengal. In the first general election under the Reforms, when the non-co-operation movement was at its highest pinnacle of virulence, the number of enfranchised persons in Bengal was 1,006,316 out of a population of 44,618,000 or 2.2 per cent.

The following table prepared by the Government of Bengal* in respect of the Mohamedan and non-Mohame-

* Bengal Government's dispatch to the Government of India, dated 21st July, 1923.

dan General constituencies shows the percentage of enfranchised persons to the total population and the percentage of votes recorded to the number of electors on the register in the General Elections of 1921 :

Constituencies.	PERCENTAGE Enfranchised.	Percentage of votes recorded to electors.
Non-Mohamedan Urban ...	5.0	41.8
Non-Mohamedan Rural ...	2.4	33.8
Total non-Mohamedan ...	2.6	34.5
Mohamedan Urban ...	3.0	16.3
Mohamedan Rural ...	1.9	22.4
Total Mohamadan ...	1.9	22.2

In the opinion of the Government,

“ the non-co-operation movement exercised an appreciable influence in re-stricting the size of the polls in the general constituencies and this was more marked in the Mohamedan than in the non-Mohamedan electorates.”

At the same time, in the case of the Mohamedan voters, the Government thought that the relatively low percentage could not be wholly attributed to non-co-operation, as the Muslim community was less educated and less politically active than the Hindu. The point that has to be noted is that there should have been 29.3 per cent. of voters exercising their franchise in the stronghold of the Congress and the Khilafat at a time when the anti-Reform campaign was in full swing. A higher percentage of voters easily went to the polls in subsequent years, with the suspension of the Mahatma's non-co-operation. It is significant that, notwithstanding the lack of facilities for voting and the fact that the villagers had to walk miles to go to the nearest polling stations, in the absence of modern facilities of travelling, they made a point of exercising their right of vote.

The most noteworthy feature of the elections was that the tenants could not be easily coerced to vote for the nominees of the land-holders—a staggering revelation to the latter who have never since taken kindly to the Reforms and who will always resist any idea of extension of the present electorates.

Agrarian Legislations have been introduced in some provinces which have not wholly satisfied the peasants. Kisan Sabhas (peasant clubs) have been organised in several provinces

“What remedy will you bring for the scarcity of which the entire village is a victim?” “How are you going to extend medical aid to these disease-stricken places?”

Such are the questions that the villagers generally put to the candidates for Councils or District Boards. A canal project interests him, though irrigation is not a transferred subject, while, curiously enough, agriculture is not reserved along with irrigation. Building of new roads and new railways absorbs his attention. The villager takes a great interest in the Councils; in the provision of schools and dispensaries; in the reduction of dacoity and robbery; in the protection of his cattle and property. He has no use for the candidate of his master be he good or bad, because he could not expect anything better than he could from his master in the past. He chooses his own candidate, who lives and moves and has his being amongst the villagers and tenants. The vote by ballot has given him freedom from the interference of the agents of his master.

It cannot be denied that there are also victims of coercion among the tenants. Sometimes the unfortunate victim has voted in a way which he could not approve when left to himself. But it is fast becoming patent to him that he is the master of his own vote, and he must vote for him who is competent and who works

for the commonweal, instead of for the parasite of a big man.

Mr. Montagu had anticipated all this when he wrote with confidence :

“ Eventually it will dawn upon him as it has done upon the agricultural classes elsewhere that because he has a vote he has the means of protecting himself and if those who claim to represent him neglect his interest he can discard them.”

This lesson which he has learned in the Local and District affairs he is also applying to the Legislatures and the Government. It has begun to occur to him as Mr. Montagu had prophesied,

“ That if the landlords are oppressive, and usurers grasping, and subordinate officials corrupt he has at his command a better weapon than the *lathi* or the hatchet with which to redress his wrongs.”*

Now he goes to the Councillor, the agitator, or the social reformer. His horizon is widened.

This awakening of the peasantry of India is a grand outcome of the Reforms. It reached its acme in the United Provinces when the tenants wanted a better standard of living and more wages for their labour. It was open to the landed proprietor to turn them out if they incurred his displeasure. The easiest way to incur his displeasure is to follow one's own will at the elections.

The Reforms therefore have brought the peasant into clash with the landlords. His philosophic content is a thing of the past. To-day he seems to see almost with the eye of socialism (with apologies to the poet) :

“ Every contiguous palace rears its head
To shame the meanness of his humble shed.”

* Montagu-Chelmsford Report, para. 146.

He is no longer innocent of his rights. He is sensitive about his wrongs. Every election campaign brings home to him that he is a citizen of the world ; that the world has been unkind to him ; that he is master of his fate and he must fight for his rights.

An agitation of gigantic dimensions was in progress in the United Provinces. The peasants gathered in their thousands and held meetings. In Rai Bareilly, a district in United Provinces, firing had to be opened to intimidate the peasants. With the firing the politicians appeared on the scene. Newspapers took up their cause. Repression acts like alcohol on the agitators. It goes straight to their heads. And they venture and sacrifice as they dare not do in their sober moments. Greater repression had to be invited to put down increased agitation. The Governor-in-Council acting with his Ministers applied the Seditious Meetings Act to four principal districts of Oudh which were the seething cauldrons.

Here it may be mentioned that this particular Act was denounced as " repressive " by both the Ministers in their unregenerate days, as clothing the Executive with extraordinary authority. But when put in a position of responsibility they had no hesitation in supporting this measure after critical examination of the necessity for it. The Liberals and the Council also supported it, and the result was, at the next General Election, the former were wiped out. One of the Ministers retired from public life while the other who sought election to the Legislative Assembly was defeated precisely because he supported the suppression of the Kisan (Peasant) Campaign. But old wounds have healed, and one of the martyred districts returned him at the last General Election, in spite of the crowing of the Congress people against him.

By the way, this incident gives an idea of the readiness of the politicians to uphold law and order and of

the sporting spirit of the electorates not to nurse old grievances, but to bring to bear an intelligent view on new circumstances and changed situations.

It has been said that only six millions out of the large population of British India have been enfranchised and that they are only between two or three per cent. of the total population ; therefore India is unfit for responsible Government unless 50 per cent. of her population can exercise their votes as in England. It is not proper to compare the beginning of Reforms in India with an advanced democracy like England. But what was the state of things in that great democratic country when Reforms were first introduced ? Every student of English history knows that at the time of the first Reform Bill in 1832 only 3 per cent. were enfranchised. The number of voters increased to 4.5 per cent. after 1832. It was raised to 9 per cent. when franchise was extended five years later under the Reforms Act of 1867. Seventeen years after it was further raised to less than 19 per cent. (1884). Thirty four years after it was raised to over 50 per cent.*

Contrasting the beginnings of Parliamentary Reform in India and in England, one feels gratified that there are no "rotten boroughs" in India.

Fierce opponents of Reforms there no doubt exist. One of them lugubriously describes the Reforms as

"Aiming straight at self-government of the Dominion pattern and consequently accelerating the 'Indianisation' of the Legislative Councils and the Civil Service to a degree which left the latter with a bare "steel frame" of British officials, while it took the heart out of the steel. Nothing was done to strengthen the Government as a Government. The ranks of the administrative services might still be packed with disloyal intriguers, and it was observed

* *Function of Liberalism.* By Dr. W. A. Chapple. *Contemporary Review*, September, 1924.

with misgiving that to attack Government seemed the easiest way to a lucrative post, which was a new thing, which the *real India* could never be expected to understand except as the frightened action of a doomed ruler, whose protection could no longer be relied upon."* (*The Italics are mine.*)

More competent men bear glowing testimony to the fact that the Reforms have engendered a sense of self respect and self-protection and a spirit of self-help in "the real India" where the villagers live. Testimony to the fact that the outlook has totally changed, that the dry bones in the valley have become instinct with life, and that a new and healthy spirit has begun animating the real India is borne by as high an authority as the Governor of one of the educationally backward provinces of India which is also the best military province :

"The extension of the electoral system," said Sir Malcolm Hailey, "† has brought into the orbit of politics classes whose interest were previously unvoiced and the free discussion here of their needs and requirements has given a new aspect to the whole of public life in the Punjab. The value of this development must not be judged merely by the force of the impact on Government policy of the views of these classes. The awakening of political consciousness among our rural classes had given them a new outlook as there is an insistent demand among them for better education, and for vocational training, great activity in availing themselves of character-building institutions such as co-operation, a new and more intelligent interest in all that concerns their economic welfare."

* *The Empire in Eclipse*, page 342. By Richard Jebb.

† Speech delivered by His Excellency Sir Malcolm Hailey, the Governor of the Punjab, in opening the Punjab Legislative Council in November, 1924.

Judging from the "New Outlook" of the rural classes Dyarchy must go, because apart from its constitutional defects, to which Ministers and Governments are witness, the economic condition of the people cries for a system which will be responsible to them. Not much intelligence is required to say that the days of Dyarchy are numbered. As Lord Ronaldshay, the cultured Governor of Bengal put it, it was "admittedly a make-shift of a purely transitional character." And when it is replaced by responsible Government in the Provinces, as it will presently be, it will be remembered in Lord Ronaldshay's words as

"a novel type of *camarilla*, a sort of political Siamese twins with the Governor as the umbilical link holding them together"; or as "the two-headed eagle of Byzantium, it looked East and West—the Ministry to the Indian Legislature, the Executive Council to Westminster and Whitehall"; or as "the famous founder of Janiculum, so conveniently dowered with two faces, the better to look forward while maintaining an eye upon what lay behind."

PART III
THE FUTURE

“ No people are more alive to kindness or more affectionately attached, if treated with kindness, than Indians are.”

QUEEN VICTORIA.

(Letter to Lord Curzon.)

“ Benevolent despotism, however, as a form of Government, is now held in India or anywhere else to be out of date ; and the craving for political autonomy . . . has created a new ideal which will carry India very wide and very far.”

LORD CURZON.

(*British Government in India.*)

PART III THE FUTURE

THE future is proverbially in the lap of the Gods, whose number, by the way, is legion in India. How far "God's (seven) Englishmen" will make or mar the future, the future alone can show. Meantime the British Commission can find guidance in the following words uttered by Sir John Simon in the House of Commons on 27th November, 1922, on the Irish Constitution Bill :

"I think it is one of the encouraging features of the situation that this Constitution is a Constitution which has been drafted in Ireland by Irishmen for Ireland. In that respect it differs from the two Gladstonian schemes, from the Act of 1914, and from the Act of 1920. The procedure that has been followed is, however, by no means a novel or a revolutionary procedure. As the Prime Minister pointed out, the Constitutions under which different parts of our Empire are now working are in a very large measure Constitutions which have been settled on the soil where they were to operate, by the people who were to live under them. The Dominion of Canada, which, in Article 2 of the Treaty, is specially referred to, lives, it is true, under a Constitution which is contained in an Imperial Act; but that Imperial Act did nothing more than embody in legislative form the great collection of Resolutions which had been arrived at in Quebec as a result of long debate and ultimate agreement between the Canadians themselves. The Constitution of Australia is not to be found in any enacting section of any British

Act of Parliament at all. The Constitution of Australia is scheduled to a Statute of 1900, in exactly the same way in which it is proposed that this Irish Constitution should be scheduled to this present Bill. Perhaps the most remarkable case of all is the most recent, for the Constitution of the Union of South Africa was at length arrived at as the result of discussion in South Africa itself, and it was carried through this House within the recollection of a good many Honourable Members in the year 1909, without the alteration of a single sentence."

India wants to be an equal and integral part of the Empire and therefore awaits the same treatment which has been meted out to other parts of the Empire, so lucidly explained by Sir John Simon. If only England applies to India the principles he has so well interpreted, invests the Commissioners with the rôle of plenipotentiaries and summons a round-table conference at which they will meet the Indian representatives to draw up an agreed Constitution, the long night of misunderstanding will be gone and Englishmen and Indians will salute the bright dawn of everlasting friendship.

CHAPTER XII

PROVINCIAL AUTONOMY

THE idea, if not the rather bombastic phrase, of "provincial autonomy" was John Bright's. Gladstone pressed Bright to join his Cabinet (1868) and take up the office of the Secretary of State for India. Bright had strong views on reforms and he could not hold that important office conscientiously without introducing radical reforms for which Westminster was not yet prepared.

Addressing a Birmingham audience, John Bright said :

"Mr. Gladstone told me that he did not wish me to accept any office that was inferior in importance or in emolument to any held by any one of his colleagues, and he proposed that I should accept the position of Secretary of State for India. Now, very many of my friends have urged in past times that I should undertake this office, and not a few have expressed regret that I have not accepted it now. In a sentence, therefore, I think it right to explain why I took the course which led to my declining such an important post. You know that twelve years ago, just before I came here, I suffered from an entire breakdown of my health, which cut me off from public labours for about two years. The Indian Department, I believe, is one of very heavy work, and I felt I was not justified in accept-

ing it unless there were great probability of some useful result which could not be accomplished under any other chief of that office. I still retain the opinion that the views which I have expressed in times past—especially in the year 1858, when the India Government Bill was passing through Parliament—are sound, and that the time will come when it will be necessary to apply them to the Government of India. But I believe that public opinion is not sufficiently advanced to allow us to adopt them, and that if I had taken that office I should have found myself unable to carry into effect the principles which I believe to be right with regard to the Government of India. At the same time I will confess freely that it did not appear seemly for me—and that I should have been in a wrong place, holding the views which I have held from my youth upwards—if I had connected myself distinctly with the conduct of the great military departments of the Indian Government. Looking therefore, at these points, I felt it my duty to decline the proposition; and I said that if I was to accept any seat in this Government, I should prefer to take the office of President of the Board of Trade. In that office I may do a little good, and perhaps I may prevent some harm. At least it will not, I hope, so burden me that I may be unable to take a part in the discussion of the great questions which must come very speedily before the House of Commons.”

Excerpts from his famous speech of 1858 may be quoted, as most of the people who talk of “provincial autonomy”—in simple language, responsible Government in the Provinces—do not fully comprehend what it means :

“I contend,” said Bright, “that the power of the Governor-General is too great and the office too high

to be held by the subject of any power whatsoever, and especially by any subject of the Queen of England. I should propose, if I were in a position to offer a scheme in the shape of a Bill to the House, as an indispensable preliminary to the wise Government of India in future, such as would be creditable to Parliament and advantageous to the people of India, that the office of Governor-General should be abolished . . . I believe the duties of the Governor-General are far greater than any human being can adequately fulfil. He has a power omnipotent to crush anything that is good. If he so wishes, he can overbear and overrule whatever is proposed for the welfare of India, while as to doing anything that is good, I could show that with regard to the vast countries over which he rules, he is really almost powerless to effect anything that those countries require. . . . I do not know at this moment, and never have known, a man competent to govern India ; and if any man says he is competent, he sets himself up at a much higher value than those who are acquainted with him are likely to set him. Let the House look at the making of laws for twenty nations speaking twenty languages. . . .

“ I would propose that, instead of having a Governor-General and an Indian Empire, we should have neither the one nor the other. I would propose that we should have Presidencies, and not an empire. If I were a Minister—which the House will admit is a bold figure of speech—and if the House were to agree with me—which is also an essential point—I would propose to have at least five Presidencies in India, and I would have the Governments of those Presidencies perfectly equal in rank and in salary. The capitals of those Presidencies would probably be Calcutta, Madras, Bombay Agra, and Lahore. I will take the Presidency of Madras as an illustration.

Madras has a population of some 20,000,000.* We all know its position on the map, and that it has the advantage of being more compact geographically speaking than the other Presidencies. It has a Governor and a Council. I would give to it a Governor and a Council still, but would confine all their duties to the Presidency of Madras, and I would treat it just as if Madras was the only portion of India connected with this country. I would have its finance, its taxation, its justice and its police departments, as well as its public works and military department, precisely the same as if it were a State having no connection with any other part of India, and recognised only as a dependency of this country. I would propose that the Government of every Presidency should correspond with the Secretary for India in England, and that there should be telegraphic communications between all the Presidencies in India as I hope before long to see a telegraphic communication between the office of the noble Lord (Lord Stanley) and every Presidency over which he presides. I shall no doubt be told that there are insuperable difficulties in the way of such an arrangement, and I shall be sure to hear of the military difficulty. Now I do not profess to be an authority on military affairs but I know that military men often make great mistakes. I would have the army divided, each Presidency having its own army, just as now, care being taken to have them kept distinct; and I see no danger of any confusion or misunderstanding, when an emergency arose, in having them all brought together to carry out the views of the Government. There is one question which it is important to bear in mind, and that is with regard to the Councils in India. I think every Governor of a Presidency should have an assist-

* Population has doubled since 1858.

ant Council, but differently constituted from what they now are. I would have an open Council.

“What we want is to make the Governments of the Presidencies Governments for the people of the Presidencies ; not Governments for the civil servants of the Crown, but for the non-official mercantile classes from England who settle there, and for the 20,000,000 or 30,000,000 of natives in each Presidency.

“If the Governor of each Presidency were to have in his Council some of the officials of his Government, some of the non-official Europeans resident in the Presidency, and two or three at least of the intelligent natives of the Presidency in whom the people would have some confidence, you would have begun that which will be of inestimable value hereafter—you would have begun to unite the Government with the governed ; and unless you do that, no Government will be safe, and any hurricane may overturn it or throw it into confusion.”

The great orator did not stop here. He laid down the basis upon which the whole structure of the Government of India should rest. He continued :

“We must, in future, have India governed, not for a handful of Englishmen, not for that Civil Service whose praises are so constantly sounded in this House. You may govern India if you like for the good of England, but the good of England must come through the channels of the good of India.

“Now, as to this new policy, I will tell the House what I think the Prime Minister should do. He ought, I think, always to choose for his President of the Board of Control or his Secretary of State for India, a man who cannot be excelled by any other man in his Cabinet, or in his party, for capacity, for honesty, for attention to his duties, and for know-

ledge adapted to the particular office to which he is appointed. If any Prime Minister appoint an inefficient man to such an office, he will be a traitor to the Throne of England. That officer, appointed for the qualities I have just indicated, should, with equal scrupulousness and conscientiousness, make the appointments, whether of the Governor-General, or (should that office be abolished) of the Governors of the Presidencies of India. Those appointments should not be rewards for mere party service, but they should be appointments given under a feeling that interest of the very highest moment, connected with this country, depend on those great offices in India being properly filled."

The belated Reforms recently introduced in India have not touched the fringe of responsible Government which that great Englishman had foreshadowed seventy years ago.

When the opportunity came to Bright in 1868, it was unfortunate that he did not use it to mould the future of India in the best interest of India and the Empire.

Then the present United India had not emerged. The National Congress had not come into existence. The agitator had not appeared on the scene. The martial fire of the Provinces had not been extinguished. The raw material was in adundance for a Provincial Army, more correctly a Dominion Army as each Province, according to Bright, would have been a separate Dominion. The grand-children of those who had fought the battles of Tipu in Madras Presidency, Sivaji in Bombay and Mahrastra of Mirkasim in Bengal, of the Moghuls in the United Provinces and Delhi, and of Ranjit Singh in the Punjab would have formed a splendid Dominion Army in each Province. Further, every Province would have been a separate entity by itself—speaking a different language, except the educated classes who would be speaking English.

Each Province would be bound directly with Britain with the silken bond of love and loyalty that strength and power alone could give.

Each Province would have had its own military college. The responsible Government would have produced practical men, not loquacious agitators, who would have developed the resources of the Province. A Kaiser in this century could not have dreamt even in his wildest dreams or in his megalomaniacal moments of challenging England and the world if, in the last century, the ideas of Bright had been put into operation. Full seventy years have been allowed to slip by—and India to-day has an Army not worthy of an Empire of her dimensions or population, but of one of her big provinces.

It was a narrow shave the last war. That is the opinion of the one man whose volcanic energy alone could have roused a whole people and led them on to success—Mr. Lloyd George.

They say there is going to be another war. Some prophesy that it will be between Britain and America, Others say it will be between Japan and America, while there are some others who predict that it will be between Russia and England. "That the Russian bear wants to pounce on India" is a story which we have heard for the last hundred years. The cry of "wolf, wolf" might turn true at last! Who knows?

If India were organised fully, if every Province had an army of its own, England's position would be stronger than ever.

The military policy of the Government of India has been confined to the drawing of recruits only from certain military classes of one or two Provinces. Bengal, Madras and Bombay—though the Mahrattas are a martial race—do not have opportunities of sending their young men to the Army. There was the Bengal Regiment during the war, but it has been disbanded since. The introduction of responsible Govern-

ment in the Provinces must be simultaneously associated with the opening of a military college in every Province. There are among the Muslims, the Nayars, the Khastriyas and the depressed classes fine, strong, sturdy men who will go to make a splendid provincial army.

Without organising self-defence, it is useless to think of a stable self-government even in the Provinces. To postpone the grant of "provincial autonomy" will be, as we have seen in the second part of the book, in the estimate of the Governments as well as their Ministers, the cause of tremendous agitation, which has already made all good people, both Indian and British, sick. Should this wretched agitation be allowed to continue? The agitator will find his occupation gone the moment the Provinces are endowed with responsible Government.

The abolition of the office of the Governor-General is now out of the question, though it would have been perfectly feasible and wise, had it been adopted along with the other suggestions of John Bright when the Government of India passed from the Company to the Crown, when the North-West Frontier Province was a part of the Punjab. Traditions have grown since, which cannot go, even if the system can change.

Under provincial autonomy, it is needless to say that the present control of the central Government over the Provincial Governments, of a financial, administrative and Legislative character, will become a thing of the past. Every Province, when it must have its own separate defence, will have its own separate finances. It will be the function of the Central Government to play the part of a venerable Patriarch adjusting the differences between the Provinces, and determining the terms and conditions within which the Provinces could go to the market for borrowing.

Under provincial autonomy the burden of the

Governor-General will be lightened. He will be the titular head as in the colonies.

“It is conceivable,” wrote Lord Curzon,* “that a day may arise when Provincial autonomy may have reached a stage of development in which the nexus between the various Local Governments might be supplied by a Royal Head of the State, wholly dissociated from politics, and charged with social and ceremonial duties alone. But such a situation, quite apart from its acceptability or the reverse to the holder of the office, would involve the complete transformation of the Imperial Government in India as it has hitherto existed; and it is not, in my view, a consummation that is either to be encouraged or desired.”

Lord Curzon was not in favour of desiring or encouraging such a consummation, but it will be admitted that the transfer of the Government of India from Calcutta to Delhi was effected with the purpose of preparing for provincial autonomy, though Lord Curzon himself bitterly opposed the change of capital. The correspondence that passed between the Government of India and the Secretary of State for India puts this point beyond dispute:

“It is certain that in the course of time the just demands of Indians for a larger share in the government of the country will have to be satisfied and the question will be how this devolution of power can be conceded without impairing the supreme authority of the Governor-General in Council. The only possible solution of the difficulty would appear to be gradually to give the Provinces a larger measure of self-government, until at last India would consist of a number of administrations autonomous in all provincial affairs, with the Government of India above

* *British Government in India*, page 61.

them all, and possessing power to interfere in case of mis-government but ordinarily restricting their functions to matters of Imperial concern. In order that this consummation may be attained it is essential that the Supreme Government should not be associated with any particular provincial government. The removal of the Government of India from Calcutta is, therefore, a measure which will, in our opinion, materially facilitate the growth of the local self-government on sound and safe lines. It is generally recognised that the capital of a great Central Government should be separated and independent, and effect has been given to this principle in the United States, Canada and Australia."

If complete provincial autonomy, as contemplated by John Bright, is to be introduced, the question will be asked, is the present unicameral form of legislature to continue or is it to be bicameral? It is the opinion of political philosophers that the unicameral form is attended with risks to which it would be fatal to expose a new and inexperienced Government. According to Lord Milner the purpose of

"every second chamber" is "to ensure that great changes shall not be made in fundamental institutions except by the deliberate will of the nation."

In France, though the extreme Republicans preferred a single chamber system, the majority preferred a double chamber.

"After Louis Napoleon Bonaparte had been taken prisoner by the German Army," writes Bryce, "the third republic was hastily proclaimed by the legislative body then in existence. This revolution expressed the feelings of Paris, it was not made by the French people. The majority in the Assembly was still monarchist. Every one felt that a permanent constitution ought to be enacted but the division of opinion offered great obstacles.

Among the Monarchists there were three parties. Accordingly the Republicans prevailed through the dissension of their adversaries and a Republican constitution was adopted in 1875, the decisive vote being carried by a majority of one. When the constitution was being framed the more advanced Republicans preferred a single-chamber system. But the Monarchist section (who were in the majority) and most of the Moderate Republicans insisted on having a body calculated to give stability and would hardly have accepted universal suffrage without the check of another chamber. Gambetta, eager to have a Republic, at once acquiesced."

The double chamber system will not suit small provinces. If it is considered by the British Parliament that Bright's idea cannot be translated into action they will have no other alternative but to reduce the present size of Provinces by redistributing them on a linguistic basis and maintaining a strong Central Government which will have to be made responsible to the people.

The census Report records 222 dialects in India. However, the principal languages, and the number of people who speak them are as shown in the following table :

LANGUAGE.				Spoken by people (in millions).
1.	Hindi	...	...	97
2.	Bengalee	...	...	49
3.	Telugu	...	...	23
4.	Marathi	...	...	19
5.	Tamil	...	...	19
6.	Punjabi	...	...	16
7.	Rajasthani	...	...	12½
8.	Oriya	...	...	10
9.	Kanarese	...	...	10
10.	Gujarati	...	...	9½
11.	Burmese	...	...	8
12.	Malayalam	...	...	7

By the way, English is the only common language in India. It is spoken by the educated classes, who are $2\frac{1}{2}$ millions of the population. To the uneducated classes, Hindi is like French on the continent.

If India is partitioned into linguistic provinces, what is to be the form of government in the Provinces separately and for India as a whole? Politicians of the Congress school have been favouring a federal system of government, but others maintain that the only efficient and comparatively less expensive form of government will be a unitary one. The principal danger to federalism arises from the Indian States who are over 560 in number. These States have sovereign powers. They have also armies of their own. If there were a combination among these States, they could fight the rest of India, as they did during the last days of the Moguls. Under a strong Unitary Government the whole of India can be moulded into one nation. The India States who will be responsible to the Central Government will, with the growth of public opinion, begin to think that the salvation of the people of the States is closely connected with the salvation of their fellow-countrymen outside.

If the present form of government were to be retained and the size of the Provinces reduced as they must be when redistributed on linguistic lines, the Provinces will be too small to bear the expense of a double chamber system. Their responsibility too will be limited. They will have no army of their own.

When in the maintenance of law and order, the Provincial Ministers find it necessary to invoke the services of the military, the Governor-General will place them at the former's disposal. Every Province will, of course, have more or less the same number of military stations, though the Army Department will be under the control of the Government of India.

The present provincial system will continue with a Governor at the head of the Executive who will be

appointed either from among the public men of England or India for a period of five years. The only material changes will be in regard to the Provincial Councils. The number of members, the electorate and the principle of election will have to be determined by Parliament. Some Indian politicians favour proportional representation—though the recent experience of the countries where it has been adopted is not encouraging.

When the Provincial Government is made responsible, can the Central Government continue to be the same as now? That the Central Government must correspondingly change with the Provincial goes without saying. Provincial autonomy cannot co-exist with a central autocracy. That it was the purpose of the British Parliament to introduce responsibility at the Central Government will be patent from the present constitution of India's Parliament. The Executive are in a minority. The Assembly or Parliament consists of an overwhelming majority of elected members. It has the power to reject the Budget—though in the present transitional stage the Viceroy has the power to restore the rejected items by certification. When, however, responsibility is introduced in the Central Government, the Legislature will dissolve in such a contingency and the electorate will return a more stable government.

It must be stated here that the military budget—except the small votable part of it—and the affairs relating to Indian states are not to be voted on in the Assembly. From this limitation, it is safe to deduce that the transfer of Army or the affairs relating to Indian states will not be immediately brought within the jurisdiction of the responsible Legislature of the future. This is not without precedent. Lord Durham's colonial autonomy did not extend the management of military defence to the colonial authorities.*

* Egerton's *Federations and Unions in the British Empire*, page 23.

All Moderate Indians recognise that this is a fundamental issue, the settlement of which will be possible only when the atmosphere of mutual distrust disappears with the growth of better understanding and the working of the limited responsible government.

Just as provincial autonomy will necessitate changes in the Central Government, the latter will compel corresponding changes in the relations between the Secretary of State and the Government of India. The position of the Secretary of State for India to-day is as different from that of the Secretary of State for the Dominions as the position of India is from that of the Colonies. With the approximation of the status and power of India to those of the colonies, the function of the Secretary of State will also have to be suitably altered. When India is given Dominion Status, the office of the Secretary of State for India in Council will become superfluous.

With the introduction of the Montagu reforms, one important change was effected—the salary of the Secretary of State for India, which used to be paid out of *India's revenues*, was placed on the *British Estimates*.* This change apart, the power of the Secretary remains the same as before. The Government of India is only a subordinate branch of the administration, the Secretary of State having complete powers of superintendence, direction, and control over all acts, operations and concerns which relate to the Government or the revenues of India. Under Section 33 of the Government of India Act, the Governor General-in-Council is required to pay due obedience to the orders of the Secretary of State in regard to both the civil and the military Government of India.

Not only has the Secretary of State control over the Government of India, but his tentacles are extended

* Section 2 (3) of the Government of India Act, 1919.

to-day also to the Provincial sphere. The Secretary of State controls the Reserved Departments. As seen in previous chapters the Reserved half, especially the Finance Department, control the destinies of the Transferred half. Rule 27 of the Devolution Rules reveals to what extent the Secretary of State has power to make or mar the Transferred Departments :

- (1) The Local Government of a Governor's Province shall not without the previous sanction of the Secretary of State in Council, or of the Governor General in Council, as the case may be, include any proposal for expenditure on a Transferred subject in a demand for a grant, if such sanction is required by the provisions of Schedule III to those rules.
- (2) Subject to the provisions of sub rule (1), the Local Government of a Governor's Province shall have power to sanction expenditure of any grant voted by the Legislative Council.
- (3) The Local Government of a Governor's Province shall have power to sanction any expenditure on Transferred subjects which relates to the heads enumerated in Section 72d (3) of the Act, subject to the approval of the Secretary of State in Council, if such approval is required by any rule for the time being in force.

The point to be borne in mind in this connection is that the ministers do not possess the right of proposal either for an increase or decrease in taxation, which belongs to the Finance Department which is responsible to the Secretary of State.

The constitutional position of the provincial Government is briefly this :*

* N.P.—Government's Memorandum submitted to the Reforms Enquiry Committee of 1924.

"Every Government, which is not a military autocracy, must be responsible to some authority, whether that authority be the people as a whole or some dominant class or section. The Governor in Council is responsible at present to Parliament, and the control of Parliament is enforced by the Secretary of State and the Government of India, who are the agents of Parliament. As already shown, the influence of the Legislature of the Administration of the reserved subjects is very substantial; but influence, however far it may extend, is not control: control rests ultimately with Parliament; *and the Governor is armed with powers which enable him in the last resort to give effect to its wishes.* In so far as the Secretary of State and the Government of India were divested of the authority now exercised by them, this would cease to be the position; and to that extent the Governor in Council would no longer be responsible to Parliament. Legally, the place in the constitution thus vacated by Parliament would remain unfilled; in deciding to accept the views of the Legislature the Governor in Council would be responsible only to his own conscience. In practice, however, his authority would be completely undermined; for to the wishes of the Legislature he could oppose only his personal opinion. A new situation of this kind could have only one outcome; the control now wielded by Parliament would pass to the local Legislature. But this control would have no legal sanction; and the Council would have no clearly-defined responsibility. It may or may not be desirable that wider powers should be conferred on the Legislative Council, but this particular method has all the disadvantages and none of the advantages of a formal transfer."

So long as the Secretary of State is responsible to the

British Parliament for the administration of India, he will continue to exercise his present powers of superintendence, direction and control, both in regard to the Central and the Provincial Government. The grant of Provincial autonomy is inconceivable unless these powers are transferred from the Secretary of State and Parliament to the Provincial Governments and Legislatures in India.

The question, therefore, arises, is the Secretary of State for India prepared for his own eventual constitutional extinction?

That the Secretary of State will not easily agree to, and Parliament will not readily acquiesce in, the abolition of his powers in regard to the military affairs will be acknowledged by all those who are aware of the amount of control over Army administration that is exercised from Whitehall. Under Section 33 of the Government of India Act, the control of both Civil and Military governments is left ultimately in the hands of the Secretary of State. But the deplorable extent of the actual control exercised was brought out in the report of Lord Esher's Committee which examined the problem of post-war organisation in 1919:

"We are confronted with evidence of the continued reluctance of the India Office to relinquish into the hands of the Government of India greater freedom in the administration of the Army, even in cases where this could be done without compromising the administration of the Army at home, which is contrary to the sound principle of uniformity in the military policy.

"We are strongly of opinion that greater latitude should be allowed to the Governor General in Council and to the Commander-in-Chief in India in matters affecting internal military administration,"

The interference of the Secretary of State was further revealed in his Minute of Dissent by Sir Purushottamdas Thakurdas as member of Lord Inchcape's Committee on Retrenchment of Expenditure of the Government of India (1922) :

"The Commander-in-Chief is the responsible advisor to the Government of India regarding military policy and affairs. Should the Government of India differ from the Commander-in-Chief on any question, the Secretary of State may, and not infrequently does, uphold the Commander-in-Chief and force a certain line of action on the Government of India. At times even when, as sometimes happens, the Government of India and the Commander-in-Chief agree, the Secretary of State rejects their unanimous recommendation and forces on them a different line of action, irrespective of the additional cost to the Indian Exchequer. This interference of the Secretary of State is not confined to questions of Imperial interests, or to broad lines of policy, but extends to such administrative details as the comforts of British soldiers or the emoluments of officers."

The denial to the Assembly of the right of voting on military estimates, the slow pace of Indianisation of the Army, the unwillingness to face the necessity of introducing military colleges in India and above all the excessive interference of the Secretary of State in Army affairs in India—all these go to show that no amount of India's impatience will move Whitehall to relinquish their power in this matter immediately. That is a fact which must be recognised by the Indian agitators. But at the same time it must be understood by the authorities in Whitehall and by Parliament that Provincial autonomy will be reduced to a mockery without provision for self-defence. This takes us

back to the far-sighted advice of John Bright in regard to military defence. Whatever the modifications in regard to the Central Government may be, no provincial autonomy will be complete without a Provincial militia for the internal security of the Provinces, controlled by the Provinces themselves. This militia, if kept up to the modern standard of military requirements, will be of great use to Britain in future wars. This will incidentally reduce the expenditure on the Indian Army which has been for the last forty years a subject of fierce controversy between the Government and the people.

CHAPTER XIII

INDEPENDENCE OR DOMINION STATUS?

PROVINCIAL autonomy, it must frankly be admitted, will not satisfy the Extremist, but the Moderate can be trusted to accept it and work it provided it is complete and genuine, as indicated in the previous chapter and not a camouflaged unreality as it could easily be by transferring to the central Government some vital subjects such as law and order, thus destroying the efficiency of the provincial administration, reducing it to the position of a glorified District Board or an exaggerated County Council. Real, full Provincial autonomy giving to the provinces a militia and the present powers exercised by the Government which will be responsible to the Provincial Legislature in future as it has, in the past, been responsible to the British Parliament through the Secretary of State, accompanied by partial responsibility in the Central Government, will wean many brilliant sons of India from the barren business of ploughing the sands of agitation. To-day, however, the cleavage between the parties in India is in regard to the ideal. The Extremist or idealist has no faith in the British. He has read British history differently from the Moderate or Liberal.

The Extremist thinks that Great Britain has never given political freedom to any coloured race and that wherever she has given it even to the white people, it was not out of her own free will, but in response to the use of force. He refers to the rebellion in Canada and the Boer War. India is, he says, in the programme

of the Imperialist, doomed to permanent exploitation and dependence. Her unlimited resources and possibilities are useful for purposes of the white Empire in times of peace and war. India, he thinks, will never be taught the art of modern warfare, lest she should master it and use it against the West—though neither geographically nor temperamentally can India do such a thing. The development of her national resources, the simplicity of her sturdy population and its numerical strength would enable her to be a match for any Western Power. He does not think India will get colonial autonomy because India is not a colony of Britain. He says India has nothing in common with England except the hard and unpleasant fact that she has been ruled and exploited for a century and a half. He aspires for total separation from England not only on political but economic grounds.

India's economic interests, in his opinion, conflict all along the line. If the Government of India encourages indigenous industries as the Government of Japan has done, and India manufactures articles out of the raw materials she exports, she will cease to import the large quantity of British goods which she does to-day, and if Britain's trade suffers, Britain will coerce India into an unwilling agreement against her own interests. To him it is not conceivable that India can remain in the British group and yet be mistress of her own future.

“Can India ever attain Dominion Status and be an equal member of the British Commonwealth,” argues the Idealist. “If this happens, India by virtue of her vast population and her tremendous latent resources inevitably becomes the predominant partner in the group. The British Commonwealth would be dominated by India and the centre of gravity shifted from London to Delhi. It is not conceivable that England or her Dominions will

agree to this. It will be easier to deal with India as an independent power than as a part of their own concern."

The idealist cannot conceive of India as a Dominion except as a nominal member of the Empire group. Dominion Home Rule, he says, will only give India a semblance of political power, but without an effective voice in important matters of domestic and foreign policy, financially a thrall of London. If India wants to play the Imperialist game for the benefit of England, says he, she cannot aspire to anything better than Home Rule. Can the Indian lamb and the British lion co-operate, he asks, except in the only way known to nature and the forest? He cannot think of any alternative between complete freedom having no connection whatever with England and present subjection.

The idealist sees more of contrast between Dominions and India; England and the Dominions have the common colour and culture, same origin and language and same sentiment and religion. Even then, he asks, are not the Dominions drifting away from the Empire, especially when there is a conflict of economic interests. He points to the anti-Empire parties in South Africa, in the Irish Free State and in Canada. Why should India which has a different colour, a different culture, an altogether different race and conflicting interests belong to a group in which there could be no identity either of ideals or of interest.

If India has a message, he says, to give to the world, she can do so more effectively as an independent country than as a member of the British Commonwealth. Even England will listen to her more attentively if the message comes from a free and separate country than if it is accompanied with economic friction and domestic squabbles which are inevitable in an unholy association.

The idealist broods over the grand reception that the King of Afghanistan received in Europe ! Why, he asks, is the Afghan King made so much of ? Maharajas there are in India who rule over much larger territories than Afghanistan. But they go to Europe and return, unknown and unnoticed. If they are noticed, it is as the "be-jewelled princes of our large Dependency." But nations of Europe vie with one another in entertaining King Amanullah. It was significant that Moscow and London were competing with each other in their anxiety to please the ruler of a little kingdom in the East, who holds the key to the western gates of India.

The idealist has no doubt about the power and glory of independence as contrasted with the importance and humiliation of dependence. He quotes the Sacred books in which it is said :

"Sarvam Paravasham Dhukkam, Sarvam Atmavasham Sukham.

(Dependence on others is misfortune, whereas self-dependence is happiness.)

"Janani Janmabhumi Scha Svarga Dapi Gariyasi."

(The Mother and the Motherland are more glorious than Heaven.) And so on and so forth.

The Sacred Books are not necessarily holy to him, because he is not religious ! He does not live in the past ! He is a product of English culture himself ! Having known the powerful West, he cannot bear the idea of his country being in the present condition even after a hundred and fifty years of British Rule.

The idealist says, a hundred and fifty years ago, Europe and India were in the same grade of civilisation, industrialism and commerce, and science. India would have progressed even more rapidly than Japan if she had not come under foreign yoke. Her indus-

tries were killed by Free Trade dumping cheap, showy, foreign articles on the market.

India slept happy on the lap of the foreign ruler when a huge industrial revolution was changing the face of the world. The idealist sees the industrial revolution and its aftermath in his own light and interprets it in his own way. He shews to his people how it has resulted in unequal distribution of wealth, and in the concentration of increased production and wealth in the hands of a few individuals in few countries, how a struggle for raw materials and markets followed bringing into existence the Imperialism of the last century. India not being an industrial nation, not because she had no resources, but they were not tapped for the last hundred years, she has not become an Imperialist but has been in the keeping of an Empire. She has not had the opportunity to become internationalised, she has become anglicised. The international character of Imperialism does not affect her or benefit her, because she has no right to shape it, no power to fight it or exploit it. Others regulate her affairs not as it suits her but as it suits them. The industrialism has broken down the international boundaries so far as other countries are concerned. Each nation is dependent on another. There is really no such thing as pure independence in this world of interdependence. Independence is really equality of restraint among free nations. An independent India will be dependent on other nations just as others will be dependent on her, as in the case of England, instead of her being as now a dependent of one country to provide markets for its manufacturers and jobs for her unemployed children even though any number of her own people may be unemployed in her land. The idealist pleads for international contact and international outlook.

The idealist has no faith in Imperialism. His principal aim is to oppose Imperialism wherever he finds

it. He would gladly have allied himself with British Socialism, but he considers it a fraud, a kind of astute Imperialism masquerading as Socialism. They are "Liberals in red ties," as Mr. H. G. Wells put it. Therefore he will have nothing to do with any English parties whose selfishness will not enable them to renounce India. India will have to "wrest freedom," he says, from English hands and he prepares the country for a bitter struggle. He openly preaches that when the next war breaks out, India should decline to help England, who is sure to be beaten without India's help. If there is no early war, though he has no doubt that war will break out soon, he will develop a revolutionary ferment in the country itself.

"The Empire is fast approaching dissolution," he declaims, to audiences as vast as they are gullible, "and any world-crisis may end it. The British people have shown extraordinary ability in adapting themselves to changing circumstances and to this they owe their strength and the long lease of power they have enjoyed. But the world is moving too fast for them and recent events, specially in relation to India, indicate that their old skill is gone. Leave out India and the dependencies and the Empire is like the famous Cheshire cat in *Alice in Wonderland*, whose body has entirely disappeared and only the grin has remained. How long can this disembodied grin remain?"*

Such are the oft-expressed views of the idealists who are to-day a growing body in the country. At the last session of the Congress in Madras, they dominated the situation and carried a resolution declaring independence as the goal. The speakers made it clear

* Speech delivered by Pundit Jawaharlal Nehru as President of the Punjab Provincial Conference in April, 1928, at which it was resolved that the Congress should stand for severance of all connexion with England and change its present creed.

that by independence they meant severance of all connection with England. Older heads in the Congress, including Mrs. Besant, did not care to face the storm, committed as they were to Dominion Home Rule and British connection, because they thought that the Congress was justified in taking up that attitude as a gesture against the exclusion of Indians from the Simon Commission. But the idealist did not take it as a passing gesture for the year. He is not obsessed with the Simon Commission. The problem, he thinks India has to face, is a much bigger one. If, incidentally, he supports the boycott, it is only part of his day's business. He hopes there will be no "bridging the gulf," as the cry has been raised in some responsible quarters, both European and Indian.

"That gulf," he hopes, "will not be so easily bridged. It is folly to deceive ourselves that it can be easily bridged. Before a new bridge is built on the basis of friendship and co-operation, the present chains which tie us to England must be severed. Only then can there be real co-operation. It may be a few of our people are over keen even now to find a way to lead them to the pleasant and sheltered paths of co-operation. If so, they are welcome to do so, But they will be none of us."

Adversity makes strange bed-fellows ! The Moderates who have made common cause with the idealists are divided from them alike in outlook and ideas, in temperament and political methods. The Moderate is essentially a constitutionalist. The idealist does not believe in the present constitution, but the Moderate used to swear by it, until his latest disappointment in the matter of the composition of the Commission. Even to-day the Moderate looks on the British Parliament as the supreme authority so far as he and his India are concerned.

¶ The Moderate's fundamental objection to the

severance of connection with England even as an ideal is that India has a large number of educated people, men who can talk the King's English like some of the best Englishmen themselves. He has been to Europe and returned an admirer of good old England and her charming people. The educated Moderate is anglicised. His family is bilingual. The baby at home is taught to lisp in two languages, English and the vernacular, whereas the idealist has an aversion against England which he exhibits even against the language, educated though he is.

The Moderate argues when we know the modern commercial and world language and have connections with an advanced power in the West, will it not be easier for us to make rapid progress in the direction of self-development? As for the Extremist's statement that England will not help but only continue to hamper, he says that if the suspicious atmosphere did not prevail, things would not be so bad.

As regards the idealist's argument about Britain's unfair competition with the Indian manufacturers, whom they neither helped with protection nor bounty, the Moderate says :

"Let the dead past bury its dead, Clive and Warren Hastings ruled two centuries ago,"

and points to the recent policy of the Government helping with bounty and protection the Tata Steel manufacturers. When India gets Swaraj she can control her fiscal policy.

The Moderate cannot even in his wild dreams think of giving up British connection, not only out of love of England but also out of India's self-interest, India's national considerations. India might have been lost in Chinese chaos had Britain not intervened by an act of Providence. Watch how England is protecting India ! Her vulnerable frontiers, for ages the entrance for barbarous marauders, are to-day made scientifically

“ I have grown old and weary in urging on my fellow countrymen the inevitable consequences of this wrongdoing ; but so surely as there is a Divinity who shapes all mortal ends, who requites, slowly it may be but surely, all good and evil doing, whether of individuals or nations, so surely shall poor England in some darkest hour of danger and distress have meted to her full retribution for all the wrongs done and now doing in her name to the people of India, a people the most lovable in the world, who need only fair play, justice and kindly trust to figure a generation hence as the premier bulwark of the Empire of which, if our present policy is persisted in, they *must* some day become the subverters ”

In a speech made to his constituency at Brighton in 1872, Henry Fawcett said that :

“ The most trumpery question ever brought before Parliament, a wrangle over the purchase of a picture or a road through a park, excited more interest than the welfare of one hundred and eighty millions of our Indian fellow-subjects.”

These words are as true to-day as they were fifty years ago. The dullest debate in the House of Commons that the writer witnessed was on India when Socialist speakers had to address empty Conservative benches. England cannot find time for India, though under the present constitution she is supposed to rule her ! The Government of India is to-day responsible to the British Cabinet which in its turn is responsible to Parliament which is directly responsible to the electorate. “ India’s masters,” therefore, are the British electorate. The Indian Moderates have not tried to “ educate ” their “ masters,” because it is a very expensive proposition. The Indian Extremist would rather educate the electorate of Russia and of China, if there happens to be an electorate there ! He has

no faith in approaching his "masters" whom he does not acknowledge, whom he is out to overthrow "by all means," as he puts it.

He has been carrying on his fervid campaign which no repression could stop. He has no fear of the jails which he has known or even the gallows, as he believes in the reincarnation of the soul, the reborn soul pursuing with manifold vigour the ideal of the previous life. He is like a man intoxicated with the wine of freedom. Fearless in his independence and tireless in his toil :

"A frame of adamant, a soul of fire,
No dangers fright him, and no labours tire."

Such are the Indian Extremists whom Lord Morley understood when he said :*

"They are apparently prepared to go any length and to run any risk. It must also be borne in mind that the ordinary man or lad in India has not too much courage, and that the loyal are terrorised by the ruthless extremists."

In the same speech Lord Morley went on to say :†

"A long time ago a great Indian authority, Sir Thomas Munro, used language which I will venture to quote, not merely for the purpose of this afternoon's exposition, but in order that everybody who listens and reads may feel the formidable difficulties that our predecessors have overcome, and that we, in our turn, mean to try to overcome. Sir Thomas Munro said : 'We are trying an experiment never yet tried in the world, maintaining a foreign dominion by means of a native army, and teaching that army, through a free Press, that they ought to expel us, and deliver their country.'"

* Indian speeches of Viscount Morley. Page 78. Macmillan & Co.

† Ibid., pages 84 and 85.

He went on to say :

“ A tremendous revolution may overtake us, originating in a free Press.

“ I recognise to the full the enormous force of a declaration of that kind. But let us look at it as practical men, who have got to deal with the Government of the country. Supposing you abolish freedom of the Press or suspend it, that will not end the business. You will have to shut up schools and colleges, for what would be the use of suppressing newspapers if you do not shut the schools and colleges ? Nor will that be all. You will have to stop the printing of unlicensed books. The possession of a copy of Milton, or Burke, or Macaulay, or of Bright's speeches, and all that flashing array of writers and orators who are the glory of our grand, our noble English tongue—the possession of one of these books will, on this peculiar and puerile notion of government, be like the possession of a bomb, and we shall have to direct the passing of an Explosives Books Act. All this and its various sequels and complements make a policy if you please. But after such a policy had produced a mute, sullen, muzzled, lifeless India, we could hardly call it, as we do now, the brightest jewel in the Imperial Crown. No English Parliament will ever permit such a thing.”

Repression was no doubt tried from time to time, but with every campaign of repression, the Extremist grew in strength and stature. When the Reforms were introduced the march of Extremism was arrested for a while, but Reforms without responsibility weakened the hands of the Moderates.

The Extremist party grows in vigour and number, because of the undemocratic system of government. Even the best government in the world tire the people when they owe them no responsibility. The change of governments in a free country is not due to the fact

that the one is better than the other. The one has been effectively exposed by the other, because it has long been in office. It is only when the critic is put in office that he will have a record to be criticised by his opponents when his position, too, gets weakened. To-day the position of the British Government in India is weak because it is not a party which is elected by the people; it has been in permanent power. The Government is savagely attacked by all the parties in the country from the educational, the economic, the political, the military, from every conceivable point of view. Even the responsibility for the deaths through plague and cholera is flung at the doors of the Government on the ground of no funds for the improvement of public health and for arresting increasing poverty which is reducing the vitality of the people to resist diseases. The man who talks in that manner may be convicted for preaching sedition, lowering the prestige of an alien government and creating race-hatred between the rulers and the ruled. But such imprisonments have only swelled the number of a class of people who consider themselves as having a message from Cromwell, Garibaldi or Lenin. These "martyrs" have an ever-increasing number of adherents.

A Home Member and a big leader of the Opposition, whom common "virtues" unite—an occasional glass of champagne being one of them—were talking about Who is Who and What is What in the Assembly. The former expressed surprise why Mr. So and So with ordinary brains should be regarded as such a wonderful man by the people. The answer was

"You made him a martyr when most of us had no interest in politics except of the arm-chair."

Men with more heart than head, enemies of England, are to-day the leaders of earth-shaking movements in India. Must their number increase? If the answer is

in the affirmative, then it is but proper to delay as long as possible the grant of Swaraj until India becomes an Ireland ! It was possible to save Ireland but India is so much vaster in size and population, and so very distant from the base of operations that she will be "a lost Dominion" if England pursues the policy of make-believe and procrastination.

In a recent statement to the Press, Mrs. Annie Besant said :

"My chief object for going to London is to make an effort to explain the Indian situation to the British Public, with a view to persuade England to grant Dominion status to India and thus prevent for her own sake the repetition of the folly which lost the United States to England during the eighteenth century. The reason why I desire that India should remain a free nation in the Empire is, I see, another way of avoiding a colour war. King Amanullah's proposal for the formation of an Asiatic League of Nations shows that Asia is moving in the direction of Continental consciousness. The consummation cannot be escaped, but it is still possible for the white races to decide whether it should come in peace or result in war. The questions are particularly important to Britain, because one in seven of British subjects belong to the white race."

"Both the alien directorate and the alien agency will be things of the past and all instruments of power will be firmly grasped,"* says an author of repute.

"The political situation in India," says another Englishman, "is full of danger, for India is united, as she never was before, in her hostility to British rule, in her contempt for many aspects of British civilisation, which appear to her to be largely an alloy of gross materialism and brutal militarism, and

* *Lost Dominion*, page 323. Blackwood & Sons.

in her determination to win self-government. Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Brahmins, and non-Brahmins, all sorts and conditions of men and all the political parties are animated by one patriotic aim, the attainment of Home Rule.”*

This observation was made by the English visitor to India when the situation was milder. Then the Simon Commission was not in sight or mind and the party of Independence had not stormed the Congress.

Yet another Englishman, a staunch Conservative in his way of thinking, wrote that

“it would be absurd to expect India to be loyal to an Empire which was preparing with all possible dispatch to expel her from its membership.”†

India considers that she is an outcast of the Empire so long as she is denied the same power that the Dominions enjoy. England does not deny that power. Even the King in his message has spoken of “Swaraj.” But the danger lurks in the halting, hesitating, almost suicidal, policy which England is believed to pursue in quarters which were once hopeful. Hope deferred maketh the heart sick. The policy of

Promise, pause, prepare, postpone,
And end by letting things alone

will have to be abandoned, unless, of course, England is prepared to alienate her friends in India.

Great Englishmen who peer into the future, say “Disentangle from India,” as Mr. H. G. Wells has said.‡ It is

“our duty to educate and organise India as speedily as possible for separation, for a friendly existence within the commonweal of people.”

* *Modern India*. By V. H. Rutherford.

† *Indian Problems*, by the Right Reverend Henry Whitehead.

‡ *The Empire Review* for October, 1923.

Here speaks England's best friend. An India, grateful and friendly, will trade with England. An India, hostile and indignant, will boycott British goods. The campaign is being revived to-day with disastrous consequences for the future. India is England's best customer. India is not much of a financial advantage to England, if one leaves out of account the trade connections.

"There is nothing to prevent India destroying the British trader by calling on her people to prefer other foreign countries,"

says the Extremist. On the boycott of British goods the Moderates are divided, though a good number of them are inclined to favour its use as a political weapon.

Addressing the Incorporated Sales Managers' Association on "How British manufacturers should handle the Indian market," on 3rd May, Lord Burnham said there were possibilities for British trade in India, especially in the Punjab, which had not existed in the past. Generally speaking he was hopeful of the Indian market, but public bodies in the past few years had not shown their readiness to favour British trade. Lord Burnham hoped that there would be a growing demand for British cars, tractors and lorries, but the increase could not be rapid because roads in India left a good deal to be desired—the main road to Swaraj! A Roads' Committee is examining this subject, which perhaps Lord Burnham omitted to mention judging from Reuter's summary, with the object of improving and extending the roads in India! A special Commission is travelling along the main road!

Lord Burnham hoped that

"increasing commerce and intercourse between India and Britain would do a great deal to create more social confidence."

He also hoped to see closer union between British and

Indian Houses. In his opinion, the increasing demand not only existed in necessities but in luxuries as well. The Indian market must be studied in India not only by agents but by principals, who should examine the problem in the broad light of national predilections and prejudices. He hoped that commercial intercourse with India would increase on principles of honesty and good value and multiply with the years.

Lord Burnham's statement will turn quite true if the Indian problem is settled. If, however, the Indian problem is allowed to hang on as at present—which then will have to be put down to bankruptcy of statesmanship in Whitehall—the result will be that British trade will suffer.

On the same day as Lord Burnham addressed a meeting in London, Srijut Subash Chandra Bose, who had relinquished a career in the Indian Civil Service after passing the examination, addressed a large gathering of delegates in the Mahratta Provincial Conference in Poona, in which he advocated the boycott of British goods with a view to bringing pressure to bear on the British public. Mr. Bose said :

“ In order to enforce our national demand, it is necessary to take such steps as lie in our power—because mere appeal to the sweet reasonableness of the Britisher will be of no avail. Weak and unarmed though we are, Providence has in his mercy given us a weapon which we can use with great effect. This weapon is economic boycott, i.e. boycott of British goods. It has been used with great effect in Ireland and in China. It was also used to great advantage during the Swadeshi movement nearly twenty years ago and partly during the non-co-operation movement. It is a weapon which we should wield not with the object of hurting any other people but with the sole object of enforcing our national demands and of effecting our national salvation.

We are not inspired by spite or hatred towards the foreigner but by love for our people, for our national industry and for our nation's freedom. I am aware that there is a prejudice in some quarters against the use of this method, but I venture to think that this prejudice is due to misunderstanding of our motives. Our sole object—our only motive—is to render service to our country, but if in the act of doing that the interests of any other nation are prejudicially affected, surely we should not be blamed for it. Wherever our national interests are opposed to those of any other nation the furtherance of the former will naturally hurt the latter, but I do not think there is any help for that. The establishment of Swaraj will certainly hurt those Britishers who have vested interests in this country, but no one—not even the Britisher—can accuse us with cherishing hatred towards them if we work for Swaraj.

“Boycott of British goods is necessary for the revival of Swadeshi and for effecting our political salvation. We are sometimes asked why we do not launch a programme of boycott of all foreign goods. Our reply is that that programme would not be a practical proposition and it is no use attempting the impossible. We are importing from the outside world nearly 231 crores worth of goods per annum and out of this, 111 crores worth of goods come from the United Kingdom alone, i.e. nearly 48 per cent. of our imports come from the United Kingdom. Even if our objective be to boycott foreign goods altogether we can begin only by tackling the biggest supplier.

“Out of 111 crores worth of British imports, piece goods alone account for nearly 49 crores of rupees.

“The boycott of British goods is a feasible proposition. British imports have during the last

few years been steadily declining; they have dropped from 58 per cent. in 1923-24 to 48 per cent. in 1926-27. An intensive boycott campaign at this stage will greatly help the work of Nature.

"How the boycott movement is progressing will be clear from these two extracts. On February 14, 1928, Mr. J. R. Clynes in the course of a discussion on the Labour amendment to the King's Speech, said: 'The political policy had a great deal to do with the loss of the Lancashire markets in India and China. Japanese competition could not alone altogether account for the huge decline of exports of cotton cloth.'

"The boycott campaign was inaugurated in Calcutta on the 20th February, 1928, the day the Simon Commission arrived there. Before two months had elapsed, the following statement appeared in the *Englishman* of the 17th April, 1928.

"As reported in *The Englishman*, the Marwari Chamber of Commerce has decided to ask merchants to stop the purchase of certain classes of piece-goods.

"For the past six months—a reporter of *The Englishman* was authoritatively informed yesterday—there has been a perceptible and steadily increasing decline in the demand for white nainsooks and white mulls, while the sale of the local equivalents of these goods has correspondingly risen.

"Merchants dealing in these goods are extremely reticent as to the reason for this sudden fall; but there is reason to believe that the recent revival of the agitation for the boycott of British goods is largely responsible for the present move.

"As a result, the shops are now overstocked with these goods. The market is getting duller daily, and, as prices are falling, merchants are suffering losses.

"On the other hand, *The Englishman* was informed, country-made clothes are in great requisi-

tion and are selling very much more than foreign cloths.

“ ‘Whether this state of affairs will continue, or whether the market will eventually right itself, remains to be seen, but in the meantime measures have been taken to protect merchants from further loss.

“ ‘The White Piecegoods Association of the Marwari Chamber of Commerce, Calcutta, have asked merchants dealing in white nainsooks and white mulls to stop the purchase of these goods intended for June and July shipment with effect from April 12, including ready goods of this shipment.

“ ‘It has also been decided that merchants dealing in white piece-goods be requested to refrain from purchasing these goods for the shipment of March, April and May, 1929, with effect from April 1928.’

“ ‘This is the official estimate of our work in only one province for a period of two months.’”

The above quotation from the Presidential Address of Mr. Bose of Bengal, delivered to a big gathering in Poona in the Bombay Presidency, will give an idea as to how the boycott movement is spreading. It is a determined movement. Mahatma Gandhi had always opposed the idea of picking out English goods for boycott, as it would smack of hatred, but the good Mahatma has been thrown overboard. The boycott is a substitute for war. As India cannot go to war, as the Boers did, the next best thing is to boycott the British goods. That is the spirit behind the movement.

The observations which have been quoted above are not the effusions of an individual, but mirror the minds of the boycotters whose number is legion. It would, indeed, be unfortunate if matters, because of the unsettled state of political affairs, reach a stage when India would refuse to trade with England. There need be no doubt about the fact that Nationalist India is determined to declare a trade war, which is

more effective because it cannot be put down by armaments, until and unless England is prepared to grant her Swaraj. When the question of Swaraj is amicably settled, Indians will unhesitatingly agree that English trade and commerce should not suffer in India, that British capital invested in India should remain safe.

Moreover, India will materially assist England's Imperial policy in the East and see to it that the safety of England's communications is not endangered. A liberated India within the Empire has nothing in common with Turkey, Egypt, Arabia, Persia, Afghanistan, Korea, Japan or Russia. She will rise or fall with the Empire. But an India in bondage will create points of contact with other Asiatic nations, and trouble for the Empire. Already the discontented people have begun to dream dreams and see visions of a Pan-Asiatic federation. One of their leading organs in the Press with a large circulation, *The Forward* (May 6), wrote as follows on Moscow's reception to King Amanullah :

“Soviet Russia have already laid the foundation of an Asiatic federation by granting political autonomy to her Asiatic provinces. These independent Soviet Republics are not only contiguous to the boundary of Afghanistan but contain a large proportion of Moslem population. Unlike the Moslems in the British Empire the Moslems in Soviet Russia enjoy full political liberty. They are Russians first and Moslems afterwards. The process by which Soviet Russia has assimilated her Moslem and other Asiatic citizens and made them loyal and enthusiastic supporters of the Soviet State is certainly worth serious study by one so ambitious as King Amanullah is believed to be. The tanks and cruisers, aeroplanes and submarines which the ruler of Afghanistan has been shown in such superfluity in Britain were the

symbols of brute force by which Britain holds her Empire in Asia. The Soviet State has discovered a stronger and more effective weapon than the bayonets of the Cossacks for keeping up the allegiance of her component parts. It is full liberty and perfectly democratic constitution granted to the Russian provinces that have strengthened the foundation of the Soviet State. The fabric of a Federated Asia can only be reared on the full political liberty of every Asiatic country."

Sir Michael O'Dwyer wrote to the *Times* :

"The return of the Simon Commission lends interest to the recent manoeuvres of the Swaraj Party that is unsuccessfully attempting to boycott it. The Lahore cable in the *Times* of April 14 summarises the views placed before the Congress meeting at Amritsar by Mr. Jawahir Lal, son of the extremist leader Pundit Moti Lal. After rebuking the Punjab, the 'Indian Ulster,' for its lack of 'great speakers or thinkers' and its consequent failure to join in the boycott, he outlined the Swaraj programme as follows: Dominion status would be useless to India, as she would still remain under British economic subjection. Hence complete independence, with the severance of British connection, is the only sound political ideal. . . .

"India should be made an independent democratic State, aiming at Swaraj for the masses, based on Socialism and not on a transfer of power from a British oligarchy to an Indian oligarchy. . . .

"It was anti-British incitements of this nature that stirred up the revolutionary outbreaks of 1919; and however futile they may be in Madras or Bengal, they may be a real danger in the 'virile province' of the Punjab. . . .

"There is a section of the Swaraj Party, including the discredited Caliphate 'rump,' which would be

willing to invite foreign invasion and foment local rebellion, as it did in 1919, in the hope of pulling down British rule."

Should the thoughts of Indians be so dangerously directed? Should they be thinking of combinations with hostile nations without and trade boycott within when India, suffering, humiliated, and impecunious, cries for the service of the social worker and of the government who have much better things to do than plan Frontier policies or campaigns against the agitator. The only way to kill the agitation is to remove the causes of discontent.

It will be interesting to know the opinion of the leader of the Congress Party, Pundit Motilal Nehru, the most influential man to-day in political India, Gandhi having retired from it, who is respected by the Europeans as well as the officials for his perfect gentlemanliness, constructive statesmanship and capacity to manage that warlike tribe of Extremists? Does he stand for independence? Is he prepared for settlement? The Pundit says in his latest statement, in a leading Anglo-Indian journal:

"It is really Hobson's and not India's choice and does not mean that India will not be satisfied with Dominion status, if she can get it, nor that having achieved Dominion status she will give it up without rhyme or reason, and work for complete independence. There is only one way of acquiring Dominion status and that is by the consent of England. If, as is the case, England persists in refusing that consent, we have either to submit to her will and continue to be her dependency for ever, or try to explore other avenues to achieve our freedom. We can only persuade, but cannot compel, England to admit us as an equal partner in what is called the comity of nations comprising the British Empire.

Our powers of persuasion are now exhausted and compulsion being out of the question we are driven to run our business on our sole credit. . . . We know our potential strength and we know also that world forces, which the Diehards will not notice until it is too late, are briskly at work to convert potentiality wherever it exists into reality."

The Pundit further says the offer of a Round Table Conference is still open and he stands by the Resolution of the Assembly on February 8, 1924, which was carried by 76 non-official votes as against 48 votes of official, nominated and non-ex-official members. The resolution ran thus :

"This assembly recommends to the Governor-General in Council to take steps to have the Government of India Act revised with a view to establish full responsible Government in India and for the said purpose :

- (a) to summon at an early date a representative Round Table Conference to recommend with due regard to the protection of the rights and interests of important minorities the scheme of a constitution for India ; and
- (b) after dissolving the Central Legislature to place the said scheme for approval before a newly-elected Indian Legislature for its approval and submit the same to the British Parliament to be embodied in a Statute."

It is time that a generous, a far-sighted policy should be pursued. The British Parliament can make or mar the future, says the Moderate. If they cannot grant complete Dominion status, let them at least grant partial responsibility—reserving to the Central Government in the period of transition, such subjects as they may deem essential for the maintenance of

British hold, such as the Army of occupation, the control of Foreign policy and the relations with the Sovereign Indian States. These concessions may not satisfy all the Extremists but it will considerably weaken their hands and direct energy of the more thoughtful and able ones amongst them into constructive channels for the country's good. It will certainly give a platform to the friends of the British in India, who can enormously increase their following in the country.

For while the tired waves, vainly breaking,
Seemed here no painful inch to gain,
Far back, through creeks and inlets making,
Comes, silent, flooding in, the main.

CHAPTER XIV

COMMUNAL GLASSES.

THE communal trouble has been the curse of India. It has a chance of disappearing under linguistic provinces which are more homogeneous alike in regard to culture and population, under a mixed electorate which is not based on the communal principle and under the administration of law and order by an indigenous Ministry. The frequent communal outbreaks must be attributed partly to the communal electorates and communal propaganda and partly to the alien control of the police. No government have seriously attempted to put down the communal movement as compared with the steps that they have taken to suppress sedition. An indigenous administration will show as much alacrity in putting down communal outbreaks as in suppressing political violence.

A suggestion has emanated from circles which have not been friendly to the Reforms that when provincial autonomy is granted, law and order should be under the Imperial administration. That will be the easiest way to defeat the purpose of provincial autonomy. India will not easily acquiesce in an arrangement which will put law and order outside the control of the Provinces. The present system of placing the police under the local authority which is in vogue in England and America cannot be dismissed as impossible in India.

The argument that between the politician and the police there has been no love lost in the past cannot

hold water. The politician and the police have been no doubt at cross purposes, because of the system which did not encourage politics, whose purpose was to suppress political agitation in the name of sedition and race-hatred. But now that the agitation has been recognised and the system partly changed, the politician has set to work in the new atmosphere in a new spirit of responsibility.

Even under the Reforms which only gave the shadow but denied the substance, the Ministers supported the administration of law and order of an extraordinary kind. They supported the suppression of the non-violent non-co-operation movement. They supported the arrest of Gandhi and the imprisonment of their erstwhile leaders, Das and Nehru, who would have been Ministers had they not joined the non-co-operation movement. They also ungrudgingly agreed to the imprisonment of thousands of their quondam followers. In Bengal, the Councils even supported the Goondas Act for the removal from Bengal of the up-country undesirables who infested Calcutta. The scope of the Act was extended by the Council to Bengali hooligans from Calcutta and its suburbs. This support even surprised the Government, because the politicians of Bengal were chary about repressive measures, and this Act was framed on the model of the Rowlatt Act, which gave birth to an agitation suppressed by the Government in a manner which culminated in Martial Law in the Punjab.

Having answered the charge that the politician is not for law and order, it will be interesting to listen to the politician's counter-charge. The communal riots have thoroughly discredited the police and the present administrators of law and order. If the Government had taken half the precaution that they generally take to prevent a political riot or to snuff out the revolutionary clubs, there would have been no communal riot. The politician asks why martial law was not intro-

duced in Bengal to prevent the communal storm and the Calcutta carnage, whereas in a comparatively less serious situation, when there was decidedly a very small fraction of that loss of life and property which Calcutta witnessed, martial law was introduced in the Punjab. The answer is that in the Punjab the upheaval was political while in Calcutta the outbreak was communal. The politician's point is, the white government does not feel so intensely on a communal matter as it does on a political and, therefore, anti-British, affair. The politician thinks his mentality in dealing with both situations will be of the right kind, because in a communal matter it is the heads of his brethren that are broken and he naturally feels as keenly as no foreigner can ; whereas in a political uprising, he is interested in putting it down, and thus prove in the future, as he has done in the past, to the British that he means to respect the rights, the lives and the properties of foreigners. His grievance is, he has been condemned without having been put in charge of law and order. He hopes to set an example not only to Egypt but also to China.

The Indian is a born administrator. Only he has not been given adequate opportunity to prove his capacity. Wherever he has had a chance he has proved his mettle. The Indian soldier in the field and the Indian statesman have brought honour and credit to the people. The Indian administrator in charge of law and order will not fail where others have succeeded and will succeed where others have failed.

In the future law and order must be controlled by Indians themselves, because the communal agitation has got to be suppressed. So much kindness has been shown to it that the situation has become almost hopeless. The Government used to suppress aggressive political newspapers and agitators. In the same way, the aggressive communalism has to be suppressed, which a foreign government cannot be expected to do,

because having estranged the politician they cannot also estrange the communalist. That the present communal situation cannot be permitted to go out of control will be admitted by all those who know how communalism breeds a spirit of lawlessness, which is a nursery of revolution or anarchy.

The writer may give a picture of how the loyal but communally-minded Hindu thinks :

If the Muslims had followed the practice of the Englishmen, retired to their homelands after a period of work in the country, the Muslim problem would be as easy as the Anglo-Indian. But they found India not only a good country for invasion but a better land for settlement.

The Muslim Raj, says the Hindu communalist, is still remembered in certain parts of India with disgust. It is useless for the Nationalist to say that English historians have exaggerated the intolerance of Muslim rulers because the disgust is more among the villagers who have read no history but are moulded by the traditions and prejudice handed down from generation to generation. That tolerant Muslims have now and again ruled cannot deny the intolerable rule of intolerant ones. The broken temples of historic interest, on the precincts of which were built the Mosques in sacred places like Muttra, Benares and Ayodhya, bring anguish to the Hindu mind.

If the Mohamedan was about to be beaten out of the land by the Hindus who had rallied under the Mahratta banner, it was because he was a fanatic and an iconoclast. His religion does not believe in idolatry and every religious Muslim ruler aspired to enforce the dictates of his religion on his subjects. On the rock of religion the Islamic Empire has been dashed to pieces. The British Empire flourishes to-day as the Empire of Asoka because it has avoided the mistakes of the Mohamedan Emperors. The one secret of governing India is tolerance of the religions

of the country. The one obstacle in the way of India's self-development is also religion.

To the loyal Hindu the most sacred possession on the face of the earth is Hinduism. He does not care so much for freedom or politics as he does for the cow and the peul tree. The foreigner can rule the Hindu till the crack of doom so long as his cow is not eaten and his peul tree is watered. If the objection to the foreign rule comes now and again from the religious-minded Hindu, it is because of its incompetence to prevent occasional Muslim outbreaks. In the Hindu States of Mysore and Baroda, of Travancore and Kashmere, though the last mentioned State has a Hindu ruler, it is really a Muslim State in the sense it has a majority of Muslim subjects, the Maharaja sees to it that no riot takes place. Why should not, asks the Hindu, the English put down communal riots with the same ferocity with which they put down political suspects and insurrections? The Hindu agitation for Swaraj has been increased by the frequency of communal riots.

The Muslim wants "Swaraj" for purposes of his own complains the Hindu communalist. He has not adopted the Indian culture, he would rather retain his Persian-cum-Arab *Kultur*. Even in dress he will adopt a different style from the Hindu. The Hindu wears a *dhoti* and *kurta* and the Muslim a *pygama* and *achakan*. The Hindus and the Muslims also speak different languages. The Muslim would not merge his Urdu, a hybrid of Persian and Hindi, in the national language of Hindustan. He is animated by what Mr. Montagu called "extra-territorial patriotism."

This has been explained by the Khilafatists as inevitable. Because the sacred places of the Muslims lie outside India, how can they be expected not to look westward and derive their inspiration from there? Because Islam is pan-Islam, how can they fail to feel that the Afghan and the Persian, the Arab and the

Turk are his brothers. Blood and religion are thicker than politics and nationality.

The India of the Muslim begins in Cape Comorin and ends somewhere near the Caspian Sea. The Muslim believes in a revival of Islam which will avenge the dismemberment of Turkey. To his mind history will repeat itself to revenge.

The Muslim is a far-sighted politician. While he has allowed a section to stray out of the fold, to make common cause with the Hindu Extremist and egg them on from madness to greater madness against the British Raj, he would himself exploit the latter's natural hostility to the Hindu agitator, natural because hostility breeds hostility. He has secured by his superior tactics, using one section to bully the Hindu in the name of nationalism and the other section to flatter the Englishman in the sacred name of loyalty, separate representation in the Legislatures. The Hindu Nationalist, fearing that he would lose the Muslim support in his constitutional campaign for Swaraj, foolishly agreed to this ugly innovation by way of a compromise! The British could not very well overlook the support that they had received from a loyal section of the Muslims. This astute minority, therefore, stood to gain both ways.

In the opinion of the Hindu communalist, that the Indian Mohamedan is not loyal at heart to any Empire except of Islam, is known to those who have read his history and associated with him. They are Mohamedans first and last. The Turk is proud of Turkey; the Arab loves his desert land; the Afghan and the Persian love their country, but the Indian Mussalman feels like an exile, broods over the days when his ancestors swayed, though if the British had not interfered with the development of Hindu unification under the banner of Sivagee and his descendants, the Mohamedans would have been driven back to their uncertain homes in Central Asia. There is no hope of pressing into service the warlike fellow-Muslims beyond

the Hindu-Kush mountains for the resurrection of Muslim Raj, so long as the British are guarding the Western gates of India. Therefore the Muslim must patiently await the time when the Empire would be splintered in doom, but meantime he must honeycomb the public services, the Army and the administration generally with the Mohamedans. He would reduce India to the position of Poland, Czecho-Slovakia,* Jugoslavia and the Esthonian Republic rolled into one, with all the racial conflict found therein, and thus putting her at the mercy of her neighbours, which even the big guns of a bigger power at a distance cannot always protect.

The mentality of the Muslims—whether of the Mopla of Malabar in the far South West of India, or the Pathan of the North West—is the same. They are spurred to action only by religion. No mass movement among the Muslims was so great a success as the Khilafat, though in the home of the Caliph the people cared not a straw for him. The Indian Muslim has frankly not half the enthusiasm for Swaraj that he has for the resurrection of Islam. Famine in Smyrna would make a Muslim villager in Bihar sell his property and subscribe for the condition of his suffering brothers across the distance, but he will be unmoved by the worst of famine in his own neighbourhood of Orissa. A careful study of the statements of the thousands of accused in the non-co-operation movement of 1921 would reveal that the Muslim emphasised the Khilafat whereas the Hindu laid stress on Swaraj. "The Pathan belongs more to the hills than to India,"† and the Mohamedans of India belong more to Arabia, Mesopotamia, Persia and Afghanistan than to India.

Diwan Bahadur Ranga Chariar in his *Minute of*

* *What are the Rights of the Muslim Minority in India?* By Dr. S. A. Khan. The Indian Press, Allahabad.

† *Report of the North-West Frontier Committee, 1924.* Government Central Press, Delhi.

Dissent to the Report of the North West Frontier Inquiry Committee, brings out some of the salient features of Muslim life on the Frontier. The frontier Muslims have the fullest sympathy of the Muslims throughout India as illustrated by the Muslim League stipulating "Reforms for the Frontier" an essential item in the Hindu-Muslim negotiations to draw up a future constitution for India.

"The Pathans who mostly inhabit the Province," said Maulvi Nur Baksh, B.A., LL.B., an educated Muslim pleader practising in Dera-Ismail Khan, to the Frontier Committee, "are not an Indian race. Like their well-known Powindahs, there are still many mountaineer tribes who flood the province during the six cold months. But for the British many of these would have preferred to take forcible possession of the fertile plain country and make it their permanent home. In spite of the comforts of the plains, the Pathan has a deep natural love working in the inner depths of the heart towards the romantic hills, which remind him of the golden past when he was full master of his own will."

The Diwan Bahadur cross-examined this witness who cannot be described as a fanatic by any means, but may be taken as a plain speaker, and got some interesting answers which would give much food for thought.*

"Talking of the Pathans inside of the border you say, 'The Pathan considers himself more to belong to the hills than to India. He has more sympathy with his kith and kin in the trans-border than with the rest of India.' Is that true?"

A.: Quite true, because the Pathan comes from Afghanistan.

* Page 646 of Vol. I of *Evidence Collected by the Frontier Enquiry Committee of 1924.*

The witness added :

" These Pathans who live on the outskirts of the hill consider themselves more to belong to Afghanistan than to the rest of India."

Another witness, Muhammad Samijan said :

" So far as I can understand all over the world there are four or five elements which go to form a nation. One is language, the other is geographical position, another is religion and the other is tradition and culture. I think if we are sound in all these points, I as an individual belonging to this part of the frontier have got all these points in common with the people living across the border."

Q. : " Even culture ? "

A. : " Yes, even culture, for by culture I mean the ways of life—of course it is just possible that educationally so far as books are concerned, I may be superior to them but so far as ways of life are concerned I am equal to them." (Pages 354-355 of Vol. I of Evidence.)

The "Afghan adventurers" preach that on political, racial and religious grounds, " the control of the Afridis should rest in the Amir of Afghanistan."*

The Hindu communalist sums up from the above the whole position : behind the Indian Muslim is the Punjab Muslim ; behind the Punjab Muslim are the Frontier Muslims ; and behind the Frontier Muslims is the entire *Muslim-stan* (land of Muslims).

The loyal Hindu communalist believes in the Empire connection and in loyalty to the British throne, because he does not want the Muslims to be strong. He will at the same time loyally agitate for further reforms, because he wants Dominion Status for his own Motherland, under the shadow of the Imperial throne. He thinks the Muslim menace is as real to

* Border Administration Report for 1920-21.

India as to the Empire, and Colonial self-government will equip India to meet that growing menace and strengthen the Empire.

Having tried to give an idea of how the loyal, if communally-minded Hindu thinks, it is but fair that a picture of how the orthodox Muslim feels is also given.

The orthodox Muslim wants to retain the individuality of his race in a country which has the power of absorbing all nationalities and assimilating all individualities to form the one great personality of Hindustan. The Muslim does not want to be so assimilated. He emphasises, therefore, the importance of a different language, of different costume and a distinct Muslim conscience. His politics are only an elaboration of his religion. He lives in a separate world of his own. He would not be educated by a Hindu, if he can help it. In Bengal, where he is in a majority, the Muslim would rather have no education than be educated by a Hindu teacher. According to him

“the Bengali school master talks his own dialect, and a vile Urdu, the latter of which is to him an acquired language as much as it is to ourselves. Moreover his gentle and timid character unfits him to maintain order among Mussalman boys. ‘Nothing on earth,’ said a Mohammedan husbandman recently to an English official, ‘would induce me to send my boy to a Bengali teacher.’ ”*

The orthodox Muslim would be guided in his future policy by the attitude taken by the Muslims in the old Turkish Empire, now dismembered. He hopes Turkey would revive again and history would retaliate. He would pose as a loyal friend of the British, crouch like the tiger, till his day comes, when he will take

* *Indian Mussalmans.* By Sir William Hunter.

the leap. In the meantime, he would ask of the Hindu and the English the same concessions that European nations have given to dismembered parts of the Ottoman Empire. His position is that the English have taken India from his community—not wholly true, because the Maharattas in pre-British days had made the nearest approach to national sovereignty, but not untrue either so far as the upper India Muslims were concerned. However that may be, he wants to be treated as a newly conquered race and presses for the considerations which were extended to Greece, Servia, Roumania, Bulgaria and Montenegro as a result of the progressive dissolution of the Empire of their Caliph.

The further reduction of the Turkish Empire after the war resulted in the regrouping of States in East and South East Europe. Pointing to the new state of Czechoslovakia, the orthodox Muslim says, there is much in its constitution to guide the Hindu and the English to make common concessions to him. He tears out a page of the Czecho-Slovakian constitution and points to that as a pattern. In the first place, he wants it, among other things, to be clearly understood that the State should provide funds for separate education for the Muslim and instruction in his own tongue. Secondly, he would make a Muslim tongue a National language simultaneously with a Hindu tongue and thus have a bi-lingual nation, though his community is only a minority of the population. Thirdly, he will have separate representation not only for the legislatures but also for the services. This is not found in the constitution of the new-born states of South Eastern Europe, but in this respect, he would create a precedent for those countries which are too divided by classes and religions.

His object is to retain his separate identity and feel his kinship with the self-governing Muslims outside India. He dreams of a far-off revival of the Muslim

Empire with foreign aid—when the British are gone or when the British power wanes. According to an official authority :*

“The sympathy of Indian Muslims with Turkey was noticeable as long ago as the Crimean War ; and, before the outbreak of the present gigantic struggle, has strengthened with improved communications and a wider interest in the world outside India. The feeling had been fanned by pan-Islamic influences, by the war between Italy and Turkey, and by the events of the Balkan War. The British agreement with Russia regarding Persia was much disliked, and British inaction during the Balkan wars was much contrasted with Britain’s championship of Turkey in former days. It was said by some that, unless the Imperial policy altered, the Muslim status in Asia and Europe would be permanently abased. The worst interpretation possible was placed by certain Muslim newspapers on all occurrences in or out of India which could be adduced in support of this theory.”

The report also refers to what is known as the “silk letter” episode.

“In August, 1916, the plot known to Government as the ‘Silk Letters’ case was discovered. This was a project hatched in India with the object of destroying British rule by means of an attack on the North-West Frontier, supplemented by a Mohamedan rising in this country. For the purpose of instigating and executing this plan a certain Maulvi Obeidulla crossed the North-West Frontier early in August, 1915, with three companions, Abdullah, Fateh Muhammad and Muhammad Ali. Obeidulla is a converted Sikh and had been trained

* *The Sedition Committee Report of 1918, Chapter XIV, para. 160.*

as a Maulvi in the Muslim religious school at Deoband in the Saharanpur district of the United Provinces. There he infected some of the staff and students with his own militant and anti-British ideas, and the principal person whom he influenced was Maulana Mahmud Hassan, who had long been head Maulvi in the school. Obeidulla wished to spread over India a pan-Islamic and anti-British movement through the agency of Maulvi's trained in the famous Deoband school. But his plans were thwarted by the Manager and Committee, who dismissed him and some of his chief associates. There is evidence, too, that he got into trouble over some accounts. Maulana Mahmud Hassan, however, remained and continued to receive visits from Obeidulla. Secret meetings were held at the Maulana's house and it was reported that men from the frontier had been received there. On September 18th, 1925, Mahmud Hassan, with a certain Muhammad Mian and other friends, followed Obeidulla's example by leaving India, not however for the North, but for the Hedjaz tract of Arabia.

"Before departing, Obeidulla had started a school in Delhi, and had put two books into circulation preaching militant fanaticism to India Mohammedans and impressing on them the supreme duty of *jihad* (Holy War). The common objects of this man and his friends, including the Maulana, was to promote a great Muslim attack on India which should synchronise with a Muslim rebellion. We shall see how each endeavoured to accomplish his purpose.

"Obeidulla and his friends first visited the Hindustani fanatics and afterwards proceeded to Kabul. There he met the members of a Turco-German Mission with whom he fraternised; and after some time he was joined by his Deoband friend, Maulvi Muhammad Mian Ansari. This man had accompanied Maulana Mahmud Hassan to Arabia, and returned in 1916 with a declaration of *jihad* received

by the Maulana from the hand of Ghalibpasha, then Turkish Military Governor of the Hedjaz. While on his way, Muhammad Mian distributed copies of this document, known as the 'Ghalibnama,' both in India and among the frontier tribes. Obeidulla and his fellow-conspirators had devised a scheme for the Provincial Government of India after the overthrow of British power."

Religious mania, communal fanfaronade and love of lawlessness are exploited by the revolutionary. The demarcation between overwrought communalism and revolutionary lawlessness is thin. The leader of a rabid communal movement or the man with a fierce communal outlook invariably turns out to be revolutionary. Rabid communalism, therefore, is not resisted by the revolutionary. It is the constitutionalist who condemns it and seeks to stifle it. Riots, bloodshed and loot bring joy to the revolutionary. Mr. Justice Rowlatt's Committee gives the following evidence of "a mad yogi" (devotee):*

"I am mad and crack-brained and a sensation-monger. The cup of my delight becomes full when I see unrest descending in all directions—like deaf dumbness I cannot rest any longer. News of loot is reaching me from all quarters, and I am dreaming as if the future guerilla bands were looting money and as if the future war had commenced in the shape of petty dacoities (gang robberies). . . . O Plunder, I worship you to-day, be our helpmate. You so long hid yourself like a canker in a flower and ate away the country's substance. Come and do again here and there re-suscitate the old martial spirit behind the public eye."

The *Ghadr* movement was created by the inventive brain of a Hindu revolutionary who was always a

* *Sedition Committee Report of 1918*, para. 29.

bitter hater of the Muslims. In front of his room, the story runs that this Hindu was said to have a notice hung up: "Dogs and Muslims not permitted." But he was willing to use the Muslims since Turkey's entry into the war to snatch the monkey's chestnut out of the fire.

"In the month of August," records the Rowlatt Report, "Sohan Lal Pathak, who was a direct emissary from the *Ghadr* headquarters in San Francisco, met some men of the Mountain Battery stationed at Maymyo and harangued them on the folly of serving Government and endeavoured to seduce them from their allegiance. The men, however, proved loyal and their *jemadar* succeeded in capturing Sohan Lal, who had on his person three automatic pistols and 270 cartridges. He had with him also a copy of the *Jahan-i-Islam*, several copies of a *Fatwa* appealing to the Faithful to destroy unbelievers, elaborate formulæ for making explosives and a copy of the *Ghadr* paper. Five days later Narayan Singh, who had been travelling with Sohan Lal, was captured in Maymyo with a fully loaded pistol, which he attempted to use against the police, a quantity of ammunition, copies of the Turkish *Fatwa* and a copy of the *Ghadr*. Narayan Singh had been employed on a railway in Siam and had come across the frontier from that State.

"This was not an isolated case of attempt to introduce mutiny and rebellion from the Siamese frontier. There is ample evidence that the *Ghadr* party in America, in conjunction with the Germans, intended to train Sikhs returning to India to the use of arms in places along the railway which was being built in Northern Siam in the direction of Burma largely by German engineers and Punjabi workmen, and to invade Burma and foment rebellion by

Indian troops and the Military Police. . . . The Muhammadan *Ghadr* party at Rangoon are known to have planned a rising on the occasion of the *Bakr-Id* in October, 1915, when the English were to be killed 'instead of goats and cows.' The rising was, however, postponed until the 25th of December, as their arrangements were not complete. During November a *Ghadr* plot in the Military Police battalion at Pyawbwe was discovered and revolvers, dynamic and other things to be used in the mutiny were seized. Action was then taken under the rules under the Defence of India Act, and the chief conspirators, including Muhammadans, were interned. Since then there has been no trouble in Burma."

The *Ghadr* party also embraced the Hindus and the martial Sikhs. But the point that has to be borne in mind is, it was willing to exploit Muslim fanaticism.

The cultivation of a communal outlook, the preaching of a communal propaganda and the comparatively lenient treatment of communal rioters—for instance, after a riot in Lucknow, resulting in loss of life and property, on the representations of certain Hindus and Muslims, the prosecution of the rioters was withdrawn—have only created an atmosphere in which there could not be much respect for law and order. If communalism is to disappear, law and order must be in the hands of the Indian Government in the Provinces.

But, the Anglo-Indian critic objects, when Indians quarrel among themselves, it is only the European-controlled police who can hold the balance even. If this means a reflection on the capacity of the Indians to hold the balance even, the criticism is untrue. To-day Indians are in high position as judges, magistrates and administrators, against whom the charge of partiality could not be lightly levelled. India is governed for England to-day not by Englishmen, who are a handful only, but by the educated classes.

Even in the police the majority of the officers are Indians. It is the tribe of communalists, who have been encouraged when they ought to have been extirpated, who cannot be trusted to hold the balance even. But even their leaders ask for responsible Governments and urge that with it will dawn a sense of responsibility.

If the electorate is not communal—as it is to-day—the appeal to fanaticism will have no chance. If the communalist flourishes, it is because he has a separate electorate, according to which only Muslims can vote for a Muslim candidate while non-Muslims vote for the other candidate, who may be a Hindu, a Christian or a Parsee. If Christians and Parsees have no separate electorates, why should the Muslim have? Even if the Muslims would have it, why should a just government divide every constituency on communal lines? The proper thing to do will be to fix the number of Muslim seats in every general constituency. Muslims, Hindus and others will take part in voting, just as they do in the West—only the communities, having their seats reserved, will have their separate representation, but the electorate being common the appeal to separatism will not catch. The Muslim will not vote for the fanatical Hindu and *vice versa*. The result will be that the electorates will return not religious maniacs, and communal trimmers, but true nationalists. In this connection it must be stated that the communal differences, which sometimes degenerate into dissensions, cannot serve as an excuse for the delay of the grant of India's right to Dominion status. Were the Dominions before their emancipation free from communal differences? Lord Durham* wrote about the state of things in Canada on 9th August, 1838:

“ If the difference between the two races were

* *Documents of the Canadian Constitution 1759-1915.* By W. P. M. Kennedy.

one of party or principles only, we should find on each side a mixture of persons of both races ; whereas the truth is that, with exceptions which tend to prove the rule, all the British are on one side, and all the Canadians (French) are on the other. The mutual dislike of the two classes extends beyond politics into social life, where, with some trifling exceptions, all intercourse is confined to persons of the same origin. Grown-up persons of a different origin seldom, or never, meet in private society ; and even the children, when they quarrel, divide themselves into French and English, like their parents."

India, taken as a whole, is not in so bad a condition as Canada was. How was Canada cured of her communalism ? By constant exposure to the sunshine of Swaraj. How was Swaraj introduced in Canada reconciling the conflicting communities ? In the constitution, temporarily, protection was given to those minorities which wanted it. Referring to one of the clauses containing the exceptional provisions, Lord Carnarvon said in his speech in the House of Lords on 19th February, 1867 :

"The object of the clause is to secure to the religious minority of one Province the same rights, privileges, and protection, which the religious minority of another Province may enjoy. The Roman Catholic minority of Upper Canada, the Protestant minority of Lower Canada, and the Roman Catholic minority of the Maritime Provinces, will thus stand on a footing of entire equality. But in the event of any wrong at the hand of the local majority, the minority have a right to appeal to the Governor-General-in-Council, and may claim the application of any remedial laws that may be necessary from the Central Parliament of the Confederation."

It is noteworthy that the Hindu Minorities in the Provinces of the Punjab and Bengal do not want protection. Therefore the question of special electorates and special facilities for education do not arise in these two provinces. Similarly, the Muslim minorities in South India do not ask for special protection. The controversy is really confined to the United Provinces, Bihar and the Central Provinces, where the Muslims want special protection.

Coming to the language controversy, students of history find that Canada was not free from it. As the Muslim in Upper India sticks to Urdu and the Hindu to Hindi, the British Canadian wanted English and the French Canadian French. The language problem did not prove an insuperable obstacle in the way of settling the Canadian problem, and the Law provided (1889) :

(1) "That in French-English schools, English should be the language of instruction, except in so far as this is impracticable by reason of the pupil not understanding English ; (2) that for the first four years colloquial exercises should be held and the pupil taught to read in English and French ; (3) that the study of French should not encroach upon the time necessary to acquire a thorough knowledge of English."

The social and language problem was even more baffling in South Africa. An authority on the subject observed :*

"The new spirit animating the leaders of both sides has been generously welcomed by both the British and Dutch communities. But in the working out of the constitution the differing ideals of the two races cannot fail to clash. Bi-lingualism, whether

* *Union of South Africa.* By the Hon. R. H. Briand.

in education or in the public service, will cause trouble for many years. Recent events are a sufficient proof. The education law of the Orange River Colony, whatever its merits or demerits, has certainly been read by the British population as an attempt to deprive their children of any proper instruction in the English tongue. Efforts have been made to found private schools where English can be properly taught. The government has dismissed English and Scotch inspectors for their alleged unsympathetic administration of the law. A deputation has been sent to England to represent the grievances of the British people. There is every sign of strong feeling. Less is heard of the difficulties in the Transvaal, where the law is less rigid. But any one who has any knowledge of the subject is aware that there, too, administration is hampered by constant friction, arising from local quarrels and jealousies over language. Nevertheless one cannot doubt that these difficulties will in time disappear. There are influences at work too strong to be controlled by legislation. As a general rule English parents are prepared that their children shall learn Dutch; while Dutch parents see how essential is a knowledge of English."

A story well illustrates this tendency in the Orange Free State :

"A Scotch parent complained to the Education Department that his small daughter had been submitted in the play-ground of the school to the indignity of having a wooden collar placed round her neck. On inquiry it was found that the parents, most of whom were Dutch, thinking that too little English was taught in school hours, had asked that that language might be used during the play hours. There had been invented, in consequence, a mode of punishment which consisted in fastening a wooden

collar round the neck of any child who used a Dutch word in the play-ground."

"In racial and religious distinctions," wrote Sir Charles Bruce,* "have been found elements of political mischief that have made our possessions in South Africa the most perilous of our dominions. But the Colonial Office thought proper to add an additional element which for a time united the British and Boers in the bond of resistance to a common foe." (Compare exclusion of Indians from the Simon Commission which has united Hindus and Muslims.)

The blunders of a haughty bureaucracy in India, or of well-meaning ministers out of touch in England, have from time to time united a divided people. Opposition to "a common foe," pursuit of common ideals, and English education, have created a new spirit and a new race—Nationalists.

A picture of India through the communal glasses will not be fully understood if an idea is not given of how the Hindu and the Muslim nationalists think. To the Nationalist there is no higher religion than service for the Motherland. He has no use for Pan-Islam or Pan-Hinduism; according to the latter, Tibet, China and Japan are Hindu, being Buddhistic, and can be brought under one federation—and if he occasionally flirts with them, it is either to reconcile them to Nationalism or to exploit their energy to strengthen the Freedom-for-India-movement.

Here the writer may reproduce a conversation with a big Muslim leader :

Q. : You are a member of the Muslim league. You are also its leading light. How can you reconcile your being in the Muslim league with Nationalism ?

A. : If I am in the Muslim league, I am there frankly

**The Broadstone of the Empire*, Vol. I. Macmillan & Co.

to give it a nationalist outlook. You know how it was started as a body hostile to the Congress. It was an organ of the anti-Congress reactionaries. But to-day its outlook has changed. It wants Swaraj. It also wants reconciliation with the Hindu.

The Muslim league invites the Hindu leaders to its session. The Muslim leaguers have been holding frequent meetings with the Hindu leaders to arrive at a better understanding, which has been more or less reached, in regard to the future constitution.

The Nationalists in the Muslim league will resist any foreign Muslim power coming to India as much as the Hindu Nationalist. To them India is dear, as to the Hindu. And they have no higher ambition than the liberty and happiness of Hindustan. Their politics are those of the Congress.

"What does it matter," Lord Fisher is reported to have told Mr. Winston Churchill, on the eve of the war, "whom you offend? The fate of England depends on you. Does it matter if they shoot you or hang you, or send you to the Tower, so long as England is saved?"*

That is the spirit of Nationalism which one finds in India to-day.

The Nationalist is really a friend of England and the British Commonwealth. He understands the necessity of friendship with England but wants to be free in his own country. English education has made him profoundly discontented with what Mr. Ramsay Macdonald truly described as the "governing caste." Macaulay said in one of his speeches :

"God forbid that we should inflict on her (India) the curse of the new caste, that we should send her a new breed of Brahmins, authorised to treat all the native population as *pariahs*."

* *The Mirrors of Downing Street.* Mills & Boon.

The exclusiveness of the European community is a feature that should soon pass away. The writer would rather not dwell on this new form of communalism, especially at a time when feelings run high in India. He would not aggravate that feeling by a single word or thought, because that is not the way to bridge the gulf between India and the Empire. But the reader can get an idea of this European communalism from a letter which Lord Minto wrote to Lord Morley :*

"I will tell you a story of Sir Pertab Singh. Not long ago a young British officer of whom he was very fond died of cholera in his house. He was to be buried the same afternoon, and had just been put in his coffin in a room in which were Sir Pertab and an English officer who, seeing that there would be some difficulty in carrying the coffin down to the gun-carriage at the door, asked Sir Pertab to send for a 'sweeper.' 'Sweeper!' said Sir Pertab, 'what do you want a sweeper for? I shall carry the boy down myself.' The English officer, knowing that this meant that he would lose his caste, implored him not to do so, but he insisted, carried the coffin on his shoulder to the door, walked by the gun-carriage, and again carried the coffin from it to the grave. Next morning a deputation of Brahmins came to Sir Pertab's house and told him that a terrible thing had happened the day before. 'Yes,' he answered, 'a young officer died here.' 'More terrible than that,' they said. 'You, a Rahtor Rajput, have lost your caste.' He flared up like a shot. 'Look here, you pigs! There is one caste higher than all other castes throughout the world, and that is the caste of a soldier! That is my caste!' Turning to one of his staff he angrily asked for his hunting whip. The Brahmins fled, and he remains as great

* Lord Minto—*A Memoir*. By John Buchan.

as ever. And that is the men that we can't allow inside an English club at Calcutta ! ”

Comment would be superfluous.

It would not be too much to say, Reforms or no Reforms, England should not listen to the voice of the communalist, be he an Indian or European. For in the growth of communalism lies the danger not only to India but also to England.

The best friend of England and India are the truly educated classes whose vision is not warped by communalism, of whom, the Father of Indian Nationalism, the late Dadabhai Naoroji, M.P., said :

“ The introduction of English education, with its great, noble, elevating, and civilising literature and advanced science will for ever remain a monument of good work done in India and a claim to gratitude upon the Indian people. This education has taught the highest political ideal of British citizenship and raised in the hearts of educated Indians the hope and aspiration to be able to raise their countrymen to the ideal of citizenship. This hope and aspiration as their greatest good are at the bottom of all their present sincere and earnest loyalty, in spite of disappointments, discouragements, and despotism of a century and a half.”

How India feels can be best summed up in the true words of Mrs. Annie Besant* who, herself an English woman, by fighting India's battle for freedom, has shown to the Indian people how the best minds of England feel, thereby uniting India and England with the golden chains of mutual love and respect :

“ O English Nation ! Great and free and proud. Cannot you see ? Cannot you understand ? Cannot you realise that your Indian brothers feel now as you would feel then ? That to be a stranger in

* *The Future of Indian Politics.* By Mrs. Annie Besant.

your own country, an alien in your own land, with no rights save those given by the grace of a Government not your own, your inferiority taken for granted, your capacities weighed in alien scales, and measured by the wand of another Nation—you could not bear such a state, such an outlook. India is patient, as you would not be. She does not want to break the link ; she wants to remain part of the Empire ; but an equal part, a Self-Governing Community, standing on a level with the Self-Governing Dominions. Is this passionate longing sedition ? Is this ineradicable hope, treason ? You dare not say so, you who bred Hampden, and Sidney, and Milton, you whose glory is your Freedom, you who boast of your Empire as an Empire of the Free. Who dared to ask if you were fit for freedom ? Charles I asked it. James II asked it. History records the answer that you gave.

“ Is India fit for Freedom ? She claims it as her Right. You will not say her, Nay. She proved her equality in death on the battlefield. Will you refuse it when the peace she has made possible broods over your homes ? Would they have been as safe from the German if Indian breasts had not formed part of your shield ?

“ What does India want ? She wants everything that any other Nation may claim for itself. To be free in India, as the Englishman is free in England. To be governed by her own men, freely elected by herself. To make and break Ministries at her will. To carry arms ; to have her own army, her own navy, her own volunteers. To levy her own taxes ; to make her own budgets ; to educate her own people ; to irrigate her own lands ; to mine her own ores ; to mint her own coin ; to be a Sovereign Nation within her own borders, owning the paramount power of the Imperial Crown, and sending her sons to the Imperial Council. There is nothing

to which any man can aspire in his own land from which the Indian must be shut out here.

"A large claim, you say. Does the Englishman ask less for himself in England? If yes, what is there strange that an Indian should ask the same for himself in India? What is the radical difference between them which should make an Indian content to be a thrall? It is not the 'angle of vision' that needs changing. It is the eye, purified from pride and prejudice, that can see clearly, and the heart, purged from arrogance, that can beat with healthy strokes.

"England and India hand-in-hand. Yes, that is our hope, for the world's sake. But that it may be so, Justice must replace inequality; for India can never be at rest till she is free."

Such impassioned appeals from mutual friends of India and England must be heard. Several such appeals have been made in recent years in India and England, in Parliaments of both countries, from platforms and in the Press. The day is not far off when the Indian question will be settled just as the Irish problem was settled, when in Lord Birkenhead's words, uttered in the House of Lords on the 23rd of November, 1920, India will be "re-conquered in a nobler conquest," as "this Island of incomparable beauty," and in doing so England will become

"reconciled to a people so individual in its genius, so tenacious in love and hate, so captivating in its nobler moods."

In such an event "the brightest jewel in the Imperial Crown" will shine all the brighter.

CHAPTER XV

THE CROWN

THE Proclamations of the Queen and Kings of England are milestones on the road of Indian Reforms.

Like the Queen of England, her son and grandson have taken a personal interest in India. The practice of corresponding regularly with her Majesty's Viceroys was instituted by Queen Victoria. She carried on the correspondence "every two or three weeks with her own hand," says Lord Curzon*.

"King Edward wrote less frequently than his illustrious mother, but followed Indian affairs with a not inferior interest, reinforced with personal experience which he never ceased to quote with pleasure. The present reigning Emperor and his Queen have been crowned at Delhi, and thus the bond that unites India with the throne has become closer and more personal and may be found when other supports crumble to provide a rock of salvation."

The personal interest in India evinced by Queen Victoria was evidenced by the care with which she drafted or changed the original draft of her famous proclamation of 1858†. The first draft was made by the then Secretary of State for India, Lord Stanley, whose father was the Prime Minister. The draft reached the Queen, who was with the Prince Consort in

* *British Government in India*, Vol. II.

† *Martin's Life of the Prince Consort*, IV, 284-5.

Germany. She perused it carefully and made copious notes in the margin and returned the draft to be re-made by the Prime Minister himself "in his excellent language." Lord Derby carefully prepared a draft of his own which was further modified by the Queen. Differences arose as to whether it would not be wise to leave out the title "Defender of the Faith" from the proclamation. The Queen differed from the Prime Minister and insisted on being the "Defender of the Faith." The Queen not only retained the title of "Defender of the Faith," about the translation of which in the vernaculars the experts said there could be no difficulty, but added the last sentence of the proclamation in her own handwriting.

Here is the Proclamation by the Queen in Council to the Princes, Chiefs, and People of India, 1st November, 1858 :

"Victoria, by the Grace of God of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, and of the Colonies and Dependencies thereof in Europe, Asia, Africa, America and Australasia, Queen, Defender of the Faith.

"Whereas, for divers weighty reasons, we have resolved, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in Parliament assembled, to take upon ourselves the Government of the territories in India, heretofore administered in trust for us by the Honourable East India Company.

"Now, therefore, we do by these presents notify and declare that, by the advice and consent aforesaid, we have taken upon ourselves the said Government ; and we hereby call upon all our subjects within the said territories to be faithful, and to bear true allegiance to us, our heirs and successors, and to submit themselves to the authority of those whom we may hereafter, from time to time, see fit to

appoint to administer the Government of our said territories, in our name and on our behalf.

"And we, reposing especial trust and confidence in the loyalty, ability, and judgment of our right trusty and well-beloved cousin, Charles John, Viscount Canning, do hereby constitute and appoint him, the said Viscount Canning, to be our first Viceroy and Governor-General in and over our said territories, and to administer the Government thereof in our name, and generally to act in our name and on our behalf, subject to such orders and regulations as he shall, from time to time, receive through one of our Principal Secretaries of State.

"And we do hereby confirm in their several offices, civil and military, all persons now employed in the service of the Honourable East India Company, subject to our future pleasure, and to such laws and regulations as may hereafter be enacted.

"We hereby announce to the native princes of India, that all treaties and engagements made with them by or under the authority of the East India Company are by us accepted, and will be scrupulously maintained, and we look for the like observance on their part.

"We desire no extension of our present territorial possessions, and, while we will permit no aggression upon our dominions or our rights to be attempted with impunity, we shall sanction no encroachment on those of others.

"We shall respect the rights, dignity, and honour of native princes as our own; and we desire that they, as well as our own subjects, should enjoy that prosperity and that social advancement which can only be secured by internal peace and good government.

"We hold ourselves bound to the natives of our Indian territories by the same obligations of duty which bind us to all our other subjects, and those

obligations, by the blessing of Almighty God, we shall faithfully and conscientiously fill.

“Firmly relying ourselves on the truth of Christianity and acknowledging with gratitude the solace of religion, we disclaim alike the right and the desire to impose our convictions on any of our subjects. We declare it to be our royal will and pleasure that none be in any wise favoured, none molested or disquieted, by reason of their religious faith or observances, but that all shall alike enjoy the equal and impartial protection of the law; and we do strictly charge and enjoin all those who may be in authority under us that they abstain from all interference with the religious belief or worship of any of our subjects on pain of our highest displeasure.

“And it is our further will that, so far as may be, our subjects, of whatever race or creed, be freely and impartially admitted to offices in our service, the duties of which they may be qualified by their education, ability, and integrity duly to discharge.

“We know, and respect, the feelings of attachment with which natives of India regard the lands inherited by them from their ancestors, and we desire to protect them in all rights connected therewith, subject to the equitable demands of the State; and we will that generally, in framing and administering the law, due regard be paid to the ancient rights, usages, and customs of India.

“We deeply lament the evils and misery which have been brought upon India by the acts of ambitious men, who have deceived their countrymen by false reports, and led them into open rebellion. Our power has been shown by the suppression of that rebellion in the field; we desire to show our mercy by pardoning the offences of those who have been misled, but who desire to return to the path of duty.

“Already, in one province, with a desire to stop the further effusion of blood, and to hasten the pacification of our Indian dominions, our Viceroy and Governor-General has held out the expectation of pardon, on certain terms, to the great majority of those who, in the late unhappy disturbances, have been guilty of offences against our Government, and has declared the punishment which will be inflicted on those whose crimes place them beyond the reach of forgiveness. We approve and confirm the said act of our Viceroy and Governor-General, and do further announce and proclaim as follows :

“Our Clemency will be extended to all offenders, save and except those who have been, or shall be, convicted of having directly taken part in the murder of British Subjects. With regard to such demands of justice forbid the exercise of mercy.

“To those who have willingly given asylum to murderers, knowing them to be such, or who may have acted as leaders or instigators of revolt, their lives alone can be guaranteed ; but in apportioning the penalty due to such persons, full consideration will be given to the circumstances under which they have been induced to throw off their allegiance ; and large indulgence will be shown to those whose crimes may appear to have originated in too credulous acceptance of the false reports circulated by designing men.

“To all others in arms against the Government we hereby promise unconditional pardon, amnesty, and oblivion of all offences against ourselves, our crown and dignity, on their return to their homes and peaceful pursuits.

“It is our royal pleasure that these terms of grace and amnesty should be extended to all those who comply with these conditions before the 1st day of January next.

"When, by the blessing of Providence, internal tranquillity shall be restored, it is our earnest desire to stimulate the peaceful industry of India, to promote works of public utility and improvement, and to administer the government for the benefit of all our subjects resident therein. In their prosperity will be our strength, in their contentment our security, and in their gratitude our best reward. And may the God of all power grant to us strength to carry out these our wishes for the good of our people."

The proclamation was a political necessity. The Revolt of 1857 could not be put down by force alone. Force achieves success. Conciliation maintains it.

The visit of the Prince of Wales to India (1875-76) coincided with the Proclamation of Queen Victoria as Empress of India. The old title of "Malika" for the "Sovereign of India" was not grandiose enough to express the position of a Sovereign of Sovereigns, because there were ruling chiefs in India, an Empire within an Empire. The term Empress of India with its Persian synonym, Kaiser-i-Hind, was decided on. This was Disraeli's last constitutional act of gratitude to the Queen.

At the Imperial Assemblage at Delhi which commemorated the proclamation of the Queen as the Empress of India, Lord Lytton, the Viceroy who presided, communicated this gracious message of Her Imperial Majesty to the Princes and People of India :

"We trust that the present occasion may tend to unite in bonds of yet closer affection ourselves and our subjects ; that from the highest to the humblest all may feel that under our rule the great principles of liberty, equity and justice are secured to them, and that to promote their happiness, to add to their prosperity and advance their welfare, are

the ever present aims and objects of Our Empire."

The same spirit runs through the message of His Imperial Majesty, King Edward, to the Delhi Durbar of January, 1903.

"My desire, since I succeeded to the throne of my revered Mother, the late Queen Victoria, the First Empress of India, has been to maintain unimpaired the same principles of humane and equitable Administration which secured for her in so wonderful a degree the veneration and affection of her Indian subjects. To all my Feudatories and Subjects throughout India, I renew the assurance of my regard for their liberties, of respect for their dignities and rights, of interest in their advancement, and of devotion to their welfare which are the supreme aim and object of my rule, and which, under the blessing of Almighty God, will lead to the increasing prosperity of my Indian Empire and the greater happiness of its people."

The passing away of King Edward caused much grief in India. Even the "rebels" of Bengal were in mourning :

"After all that has passed, I am sure you will think the manifestation of feeling most remarkable," wrote Lord Minto to Lord Morley. "Surendranath Banerjee, Bhupendranath Basu and Motilal Ghose on bended knees before a picture of the King-Emperor ! What an emotional people ! And yet the fact that they are so ought to give us a master-key to many of the secrets of governing them."*

The scene is the mourning meeting in Calcutta at which the leading Hindu "agitators" knelt before a picture of their King-Emperor, Edward VII, in sorrow and prayed for the peace and progress of His Majesty's soul.

* *Lord Minto.* By John Buchan.

Babu (as he then was) Surendranath Banerjee had earned the title of "the uncrowned king of Bengal," during the anti-partition agitation. The late Mr. Stead described him as "surrender-not." He was the greatest orator modern India produced. When he confided to a big audience that his name with the name of Babu Bhupendranath was at the top of the list of deportees during the Bengal partition crisis—though a blue pencil was passed over their names by a wise official—he could not have imagined that he would have lived to be a great minister of the Crown a decade later. Sir Surendranath fought for India's freedom under the shadow of the Imperial throne and died in the faith that freedom was secure under the British flag.

Sir Bhupendranath Babu also rose high in official position as a member of the India Council in London and subsequently as a member of the Cabinet of His Excellency the Governor of Bengal.

Both Motilal Ghose, however, lived and died as an Extremist newspaper editor holding aloft the flag of uncompromising Indian Nationalism.

How could these "agitators" be so deeply loyal? Their loyalty to the Royal House of Windsor was not a blind but a reasoned loyalty.

The reign of King George V witnessed India's wonderful loyalty during the war, which was unfortunately marred by events to which His Royal Highness the Duke of Connaught made a touching reference when he came to India with a message from His Imperial Majesty to inaugurate India's Parliament. On 9th February, 1921, inaugurating the new Assemblies of the Council of State and the Legislative Assembly, the Duke delivered the following message from His Majesty, the King-Emperor :

"Little more than a year has elapsed since I gave my assent to the Act of Parliament which set

up a constitution for British India. The intervening time has been fully occupied in perfecting the necessary machinery; and you are now at the opening of the first session of the legislatures which the Act established. On this auspicious occasion I desire to send to you, and to the members of the various Provincial Councils, my congratulations and my earnest good wishes for success in your labours and theirs.

"For years, it may be for generations, patriotic and loyal Indians have dreamed of Swaraj for their Motherland. To-day you have beginnings of Swaraj within my Empire; and widest scope and ample opportunity for progress to the liberty which my other Dominions enjoy.

"On you, the first representatives of the people in the new Councils, there rests a very special responsibility. For on you it lies by the conduct of your business and the justice of your judgments to convince the world of the wisdom of this great constitutional change. But on you it also lies to remember the many millions of your fellow countrymen who are not yet qualified for a share in political life, to work for their upliftment and to cherish their interest as your own.

"I shall watch your work with unfailing sympathy, and with a resolute faith in your determination to do your duty to India and the Empire."

His Royal Highness, after dwelling upon the difficulties and privileges of the new era, concluded his speech with an eloquent personal appeal:

"Gentlemen, I have finished my part in to-day's official proceedings. May I claim your patience and forbearance while I say a few words of a personal nature? Since I landed I have felt around me bitterness and estrangement between those who have been and should be friends. The shadow of

Amritsar has lengthened over the fair face of India. I know how deep is the concern felt by His Majesty the King Emperor at the terrible chapter of events in the Punjab. No one can deplore those events more intensely than I do myself. I have reached a time of life when I most desire to heal wounds and to re-unite those who have been disunited. In what must be, I fear, my last visit to the India I love so well, here in the new Capital, inaugurating a new constitution, I am moved to make you a personal appeal, but in the simple words that come from my heart, not to be coldly and critically interpreted. My experience tells me that misunderstanding usually mean mistakes on either side. As an old friend of India, I appeal to you all, British and Indians, to bury along with the dead past the mistakes and misunderstandings of the past, to forgive where you have to forgive, and to join hands and to work together to realise the hopes that rise from to-day."

On the 17th of November, 1921, His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales delivered the following message from His Majesty the King-Emperor to India which was in the throes of the non-co-operation movement :

" On this day, when my son lands for the first time upon your shores, I wish to send through him my greetings to you, the Princes and Peoples of India. His coming is a token and a renewal of the pledges of affection which it has been the heritage of our House to re-affirm to you. My father, when Prince of Wales, counted it his privilege to see and seeing to understand the great Empire in the East over which it was to be his destiny to rule ; and I recall with thankfulness and pride that when he was called to the Throne, it fell to me to follow his illustrious example. With this same hope and in this same spirit my son is with you to-day. The thought of his arrival brings with a welcome vivid-

ness to my mind the happy memories I have stored of what I myself have learned in India ; its charm and beauty, its immemorial history, its noble monuments, and above all, the devotion of India's faithful people, since proved, as if by fire, in their response to the Empire's call in the hour of its greatest need. These memories will ever be with me as I trace his steps, my heart is with him as he moves amongst you, and with mine the heart of the Queen-Empress, whose love for India is no less than mine. To friends whose loyalty we and our fathers have treasured, he brings this message of trust and hope. My sympathy in all that passes in your lives is unabated. During recent years my thoughts have been yet more constantly with you. Throughout the civilised world, the foundations of social order have been tested by war and change. Wherever citizenship exists, it has had to meet the test, and India, like other countries, has been called on to face new and special problems of her own. For this task her armoury is in new powers and new responsibilities with which she has been equipped. That, with the help of these, aided by the ready guidance of my Government and its officers, you will bring those problems to an issue worthy of your historic past and of happiness for your future ; that all disquiet will vanish in well-ordered progress, is my earnest wish and my confident belief. Your anxieties and your rejoicings are my own. In all that may touch your happiness, in all that gives you hope and promotes your welfare, I feel with you in the spirit of sympathy. My son has followed from afar your fortunes. It is now his ambition, by his coming among you, to ripen good will into a yet fuller understanding. I trust and believe when he leaves your shores your hearts will follow him and his will stay with you, and that one link more will be added to the golden chain of sympathy which for these

many years has held my throne to India. And it is my warmest prayer that wisdom and contentment growing hand in hand will lead India into increasing national greatness within a free Empire, the Empire for which I labour and for which, if it be the Divine Will, my son shall labour after me."

Replying to the address of the Bombay Corporation the Prince of Wales spoke the following words which came from his heart :

"I need not tell you that I have been looking forward to my visit and have been eagerly awaiting the opportunities of seeing India and making friends there. I want to appreciate at first hand all that India is, and has done, and can do. I want to grasp your difficulties and to understand your aspirations. I want you to know me and I want to know you."

To read through these Proclamations is to perceive the change imperceptible from the old Empire to the new. The Queen's Proclamation of 1858 embodies the spirit of the Old Empire at its best. The King's message which the Duke of Connaught delivered to India, declaring Swaraj as the goal of the people, proclaims the spirit of the New Empire which has sprung from the blood-stained yeast of War.

"There is also the white man's burden," said Sir Gilbert Parker, who read a paper on the "New Empire"—the Old Empire would have been a more appropriate title—at a meeting of the Royal Colonial Institute in April, 1910.

"There is the vast burden of administration of our coloured fellow-subjects."

Sir Gilbert claimed that

"we alone represented to the natives a chance of anything like tolerable existence."

In the New Empire, however, we find the brown and dark men anxious to bear their own burdens—an anxiety summed up in the pregnant word, *Swaraj*.

India gratefully reads in the King's Swaraj message a recognition that the

“sacred rights of mankind,” as Alexander Hamilton put it, “are written as with a sunbeam in the whole volume of human nature by the hand of the divinity itself and can never be erased or obscured by mortal power.”

POSTSCRIPT

SINCE the above pages were written, the situation in India has assumed an aspect more serious than Sir John Simon could have imagined. Various influences have contributed to bring about a constitutional crisis.

In the first place, two ministers in the United Provinces have resigned owing to their unwillingness to give whole-hearted co-operation to the Simon Commission. They had remained neutral in the Provincial Council and helped its decision to non-co-operate with the Commission by a narrow majority of one.

The Ministers did not resign until their resignations were asked for by the Governor. They felt that their responsibility was to the Council, which was more or less equally divided on the Simon boycott, and therefore they had assumed an attitude of aggressive indifference. But Dyarchy claims of its ministers greater responsibility to the Governor than to the Councils and the electorate.

Secondly, Mr. Vernon Hartshorn, to whom the Communists have been giving a lot of trouble in his constituency, forgetting in the heat of the moment his responsibilities as a member of the Royal Commission, let himself go against his principal opponent, Mr. Sakalatwala, in an election meeting. While exposing the pretensions of this misguided communist, the Welsh M.P. made a rather sensational attack on the

Parsee capitalists and especially the former bosses of Mr. Saklatwala, the Tatas and their attitude towards Labour in words which I cannot quote because they have been the cause of libel action and on which I must not comment because the case is perhaps *sub judice*. "To chain the multitude, you must wear the same fetters," Mr. Hartshorn's sympathisers may say, but his speech has alienated the capitalists in India from the Commission while it has left Labour cold.

Thirdly, and lastly, a more serious development is the unexpected warning of the Punjab Council Committee that it will not co-operate with the Simon Commission but on equal terms, including the right of cross-examining witnesses and having access to confidential papers and documents—a concession which Sir John had declined to make even to the would-be Joint Committee of the Central Legislature, which was consequently goaded into an attitude of boycott.

The Punjab and the Frontier Provinces are the Achilles' heels of India, from the larger Imperial point of view. It is India's "Ulster," from the narrow Nationalist standpoint. A military province, the Punjab had witnessed the greatest upheaval and repression in recent times. It was thought that the public spirit of the Punjab was killed by Jallianwala Bagh and subsequent martial law. But "the worm" that crawled through a narrow lane of Armitisar "has turned."

A responsible Anglo-Indian organ attributes the Punjab crisis to "the excessive stupidity"* of Sir John Simon. ET TU BRUTE? The critic is wrong in blaming Sir John Simon. The Indian situation is at the bottom. The accumulating hatred of foreign rule is the root-cause. The haughty official manoeuvre to make the Punjab Committee a model one by oppos-

* *The Pioneer*, dated 10th June, 1927.

ing it to the Constitutionalists' demand for complete Dominion Status is the last straw to the camel's back*

Even the Punjab had to save its face. Its sweetly reasonable men who offered co-operation were held up to universal contumely and contempt by savage critics. This only shows that steady co-operation and unwavering loyalty are impossible so long as the Indian problem remains unsolved. The only solution is a bold application of the Colonial experience to that vast and mysterious country in the faith which moves mountains, that human nature is everywhere the same, and not in that lack of faith which makes mountains of molehills. That lack of faith in human nature lost for England the United States. If India is denied Dominion Status, she will be a lost Dominion.

The danger lies in haggling; in the Liberal-Labour policy of rallying the Moderates and harrying the Extremists; in diluting the wine of Reforms with water of repression. Wisdom and foresight will placate the Extremists and pulverise their movement not by the use of gunpowder, but by meeting them more than three-fourths the way as in Ireland.

Doles, crumbs from the master's table may please the indolent and the beggars who cannot be choosers—though that class is fast becoming extinct in India—not those whole-hogger constitutionalists who have chosen "Swaraj within the Empire" as India's birth-right and must have it. They are the backbone of India's struggle. They are the light and beacon of India's masses. They will spurn autonomy in driblets

* Since the above was written, an official communiqué has been issued by the Punjab Government contradicting the allegation made curiously enough in a responsible Anglo-Indian paper, that the Punjab Government was manipulating the Provincial Legislative Committee to repudiate the loyal Nationalist demand for Dominion Status.

which argues a miser's mentality, bad enough in life but worse in politics. There is no more despicable creature on the face of the earth than the miser. England must be *English* in dealing with India. Whatever may be the vices of John Bull, miserliness, as every Scotsman will bear witness, is not one of them. The Englishman is not penny wise and pound foolish. He would rather burn the candle at both ends—and in the middle, if he could!—than be a disciple of Midas. If he plays the miser with India, he will find one pleasant morning that the precious jewel is no longer his.

That India must be conciliated is agreed on all hands. The measure and the manner is the topic of controversy. The lesser the measure, the uglier the manner, the greater will be the strife. The best measure and manner is summed up in the immediate grant of Dominion Status and the ungrudging development of an Indian Army and Navy under the control of India's Parliament, subject, of course, to the understanding and agreement that they must be freely used by England to safeguard the Imperial interests in the East.

Anything short of this honourable compromise will not kill agitation, will not weaken and destroy the Extremist Movement, will not wean the Arthur Griffiths and Michael Collins of India from the terrible course they have resolved to tread.

The Extremist, whose ranks have swollen since the last war, who does not expect England will *give* Swaraj, because he says it is never given but always *taken* by bleeding sires or sons, awaits the next war to strike the fatal blow. He may win or lose, but he will "put it to the test."

There are people in England who will also put it to the test and "win or lose it all." They, too, are buoyant

extremists. If the two Extremists are allowed to have their way, the pessimistic prophecy of Dean Inge will be fulfilled :*

“ This relative decline in power is a thing for which we must be prepared. The history of Holland and Spain is a warning that small countries have their day of glory, and then take the position which their limited area imposes upon them.”

The prophecy, however, will be falsified if England does not turn her back on the experience which saved South Africa for the Empire and settled Ireland.

“ Is there to be a different standard for our Indian fellow-subjects from that which we would apply to any other race in the Empire ? ”

asked the then Lord Chancellor in a historic speech in the House of Lords in 1920. That is the crux of the Indian question. If only the present Secretary of State for India answers it with the same courage and vision as he did in 1920, the situation confronting his new office will be satisfactorily settled, for the good of England, India and the Empire.

The task is not for mediocrities or hagglers. Napoleon misunderstood the English as “ a nation of shop-keepers ” and that was why he could not avert his fate. Dean Inge is correct when he says, in his remarkable book, *England*, that

“ the English have never been good shop-keepers. They have excelled in manufactures and commerce, but not in shop-keeping, which demands a more rigid care for the pence than is often found among Anglo-Saxons.”

India's appeal is to the broad, deep heart of England, to her courageous statesmen, not to cheese-paring

* *England*. Preface to the Cheaper Edition. By Dean Inge. Ernest Benn.

bargainers, pinch-beck Empire-builders and political underlings. There is less truth in these lines of William Watson—

“Time and the ocean and some fostering star
In high cabal have made us what we are.”—

than in the good old lines which William Shakespeare put into the mouth of Cassius :

“Men at some time are masters of their fates,
The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars,
But in ourselves that we are underlings”

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